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J. S. WOODSWORTH

A Man to Remember



# J. S. WOODSWORTH

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## A Man to Remember

By GRACE MACINNIS

TORONTO

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED

1953

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By GRACE MacINNIS

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TO MOTHER  
WHO UNDERSTOOD

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## A NOTE OF THANKS

The help and interest of many people have gone into the making of this book. There are a few, however, whom I must mention by name, because their contribution was an essential part of its completion. My thanks go first to Arnold Webster of Vancouver who, a dozen years ago, urged me to write my account of the life of J. S. Woodsworth, and who has constantly encouraged me to finish the task. Also of Vancouver is Grant MacNeil who gave invaluable reminiscences of my father during his first parliamentary years. To Professor C. B. Sissons of Toronto and Mrs. Edith Osberg of Ottawa, I am indebted for the use of letters from the Oxford and other periods prior to the All People's Mission days. The staff of the Parliamentary Library at Ottawa has been generous in its reference help. I deeply appreciate the assistance of Blair Fraser of *Maclean's Magazine* in introducing my partly-finished manuscript to the publisher and in acting generally as guide, philosopher and friend. To my sister-in-law, Miss Christine MacInnis, I owe a debt of gratitude because she took over a large portion of my household duties for several months so that I might have time to revise the manuscript. To my mother, Mrs. Lucy L. Woodsworth, I am deeply indebted. She made her letters and her memories freely available to me and trusted to my wisdom in using them, a trust so complete that she will first read this story in its printed form. What shall I say in thanking Angus MacInnis? Simply that at every stage of the work he stood ready with help and advice of the most useful kind and was steadily more confident than I that the book would eventually see the light of day.

*Grace MacInnis*



## FOREWORD

This is the story of the evolution of a great soul. For J. S. Woodsworth was at once "a great Canadian, a great man and a great soul"

I met him first when he spoke to a small group in an attic room of the old Labor Temple in Regina. Its bare walls, its uncomfortable benches, and the small audience were anything but inspiring. Yet, he spoke as a prophet, with all the fervour and much of the flavour of the Prophet Amos.

A few years later Mr. Woodsworth had become a familiar figure to people in all parts of Canada as he travelled across the country with his heavy suitcases of literature, addressing various gatherings of labour, farmer, Church and other groups interested in social problems.

Inconspicuous in the crowd he was nevertheless recognized and greeted warmly and respectfully by railway workers as they hurried to and from their duties on the trains. That he was regarded with affection and esteem by the men who operated the trains, the conductors and the porters who met him from time to time, was obvious. They remarked they had served Mr. Bennett, Mr. King, and other prominent public figures, but, they would say with pride, they had known J. S. Woodsworth.

Often he was entertained in private homes. He was a delightful guest. Children took to him at once. His kindly smile and his bright sparkling eyes seemed to draw them to him. He loved to tell them stories about people, of his trips to places like Japan and European countries, as well as of men and women of many races whom he had met on his frequent tours of Canada. This was a side of the crusader for the better life that Parliament and the public scarcely knew or seldom saw.

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

Mr Woodsworth was under no illusions as to the task he had undertaken. Should he meet Progressive or Labour candidates who had been defeated in parliamentary elections he would invariably encourage them to try again.

He impressed upon his followers that it was a great cause for which they stood, even if it was unlikely that he or they would witness its ultimate success. Very simply he would state that so great a cause was worthy of every endeavour and of every sacrifice.

Owing in large measure to his efforts, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was formed in 1932. For the next ten years, until his death, those who were closely associated with him, whether as officers of the CCF or as colleagues in the House of Commons, grew not only to admire but to have a deep personal affection for him. His fearlessness in espousing unpopular causes, his struggle for economic justice and his abhorrence of poverty, misery and war marked him as something more than a party leader and a House of Commons man. These he was but he was more, much more: for he was, in the truest sense, a dedicated crusader for the good of all mankind.

His sympathies and efforts were not confined to his fellow-citizens of Canada. The whole human race, regardless of colour or of creed, were his brothers; the world was his fatherland.

No party leader has ever had more completely the confidence and affection of those associated with him than J. S. Woodsworth had as leader of the CCF. From the time of the Munich Conference in 1938, it became apparent that there was a growing difference between his attitude and that of most of the other members of the CCF caucus toward the position Canada should take in the event of war. When the storm burst over Europe, that difference came to a head. Grace MacInnis tells the story of the meeting of the CCF National Council in Ottawa early in September 1939. It was hoped that in spite of obvious

## *Foreword*

differences of opinion a statement could be drafted which, while supporting Canada's declaration of war against Nazi aggression, would at the same time satisfy the National Leader's desire to keep young Canadians from the battlefields of Europe. That the attempt to achieve such a compromise failed is now past history.

The National Council refused to allow Mr Woodsworth to resign as President of the movement. His colleagues in Parliament were determined to retain him as their parliamentary leader. This they did in spite of the fact that his followers in the House gave their full and complete support to the fateful decision that Canada should declare war and participate in the great struggle for democracy which so soon became apparent.

"J. S.", as we called him, had spent a quarter of a century in denouncing war and war preparedness, yet when the wartime election of 1940 came, young Canadians overseas, electors of his constituency of Winnipeg North Centre, joined with those at home in re-electing him to the House of Commons. This was a great satisfaction to him during the next two years of physical incapacity and of pain.

His final illness began just seven weeks after the election of March 26, 1940. On May 14 he rose in the newly assembled House of Commons to support the election of his fellow Manitoban, Mr James Allison Glen, as Speaker. He looked very worn and tired. Only two days later, when attending a harmonious meeting of the CCF National Council and parliamentary group, he suffered a severe stroke. His old friend, Dr Gershaw, then a member of the House of Commons, was in the Parliament Buildings and when called came at once to see him. He ordered him immediately to the hospital. He told his friends that the hemorrhage was severe. From then until his death, on March 21, 1942, he was unable to rise or speak in the Chamber where he had played so distinguished and important a role. When he appeared briefly one afternoon in November 1941 he was greeted affectionately and with prolonged applause.

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

When his death occurred in the spring of 1942 striking tributes to his memory and to his unselfish devotion came from members of all parties in the House of Commons. His greatness was recognized by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which devoted a nation-wide programme as a tribute to this unassuming and devoted Canadian citizen.

To-day, as we look over the years in retrospect, there is general recognition of how much the people of Canada owe to this friendly, kindly, and dedicated man. His life was indeed one of service to his fellow-men. The inspiration he received in the home of his father, the lasting effect of his post graduate experiences at Oxford, and at Mansfield House in the slums of London, largely account for his activities thereafter. But most important of all were the years he spent in charge of All People's Mission among the immigrant population in North Winnipeg. There he was in daily contact with the problems of the underprivileged. His experiences during the Winnipeg Strike and as a longshoreman on the Pacific Coast, finally determined the path he was to follow for the remainder of his life.

As a parliamentarian his influence was as unique as it was wide. Almost alone at first, he pioneered the old age pension legislation of 1926. He kept constantly before Parliament the need for relief against the misery of unemployment through a national insurance plan. Nor were his activities confined to the problems of labour and the industrial worker, for, equally, he exposed the disabilities and the suffering of the drought stricken farmers of his native prairie country. Because he loved and trusted his fellow-men of every race, creed and colour, he fought every form of discrimination. To his efforts citizens of Oriental origin owe to a large extent the gradual removal of discrimination against them. Often he told an antagonistic House of Commons that thousands of Doukhobors had become law-abiding citizens of our land and that one day, given sympathetic understanding, the difficult minority might become good citizens as well. Himself a victim of the undemocratic use of legislation during the

## *Foreword*

period of the Winnipeg Strike of 1919, he struggled strenuously for the removal from our statute books not only of Section 98 of the Criminal Code, but of every other infringement of civil right and liberty.

J S. Woodsworth has left an example of service to humanity such as the world has seldom seen. Though he has passed on, his work has lived and his influence has grown. Social legislation which he pioneered has become a part of our national heritage—accepted by all. Some reforms he advocated have still to be made but he founded a movement which remains to press on toward their achievement. Indeed he was a—

“Statesman, yet friend to truth<sup>1</sup> of soul  
sincere,

In action faithful, and in honour clear;  
Who broke no promise, served no private end,  
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.”

House of Commons, Ottawa

May 1st, 1953

*M J Coldwell*



## CHAPTER I

### BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

**WE CHILDREN** always felt that our father was different. We could not have put the difference into words, but it was there. Other children called their father "Daddy" and looked on him much as one of themselves, only older. We called ours "Father", and there was formality and a shade of awe mixed with our affection for him. At home or a thousand miles away, he was the keystone of the family arch, the centre round whom we grouped our living. His dominant personality made us so. Furthermore, he was buttressed by Mother, who felt that this was the natural order of things.

Mother loved us children deeply, but we knew that Father came first, and we felt that that was only right. For we sensed very early that he was doing important work in the world and that he needed all the help he could get. Our help consisted of subduing our noisy play when he came home tired, of being quiet while he slept, and of learning to do our chores about the house with the minimum of delay and argument.

Mother kept urging such conduct upon us, of course, and her reasonableness was exceeded only by her persistence. She knew his urgent need for quiet, knew that home was the safe harbour into which he sailed after his voyages into the world, voyages which drained him of the courage, endurance and vitality with which he was so richly endowed. Spent and in sore need of rest, he would make for home, only to be up and away again as soon as he was able. It was Mother who through the years made our home his safe anchorage, the refuge he knew was always waiting.

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

Conscious that our father's work was important, we children sensed its purpose very well. When I was about eight years old the teacher at school one day asked each of us in the class for our father's middle name. There was much giggling and curiosity as unusual middle names were dragged from reluctant children. Finally my turn came. "What is your father's name, Grace?" asked the teacher. "James S. Woodsworth," I answered. "But what does the 'S' stand for?" she pressed. A long, uncomfortable pause. Then, defiantly, "It stands for 'Shaver'! But I don't care because he's doing all he can to make the country better!"

My first memories of his work date from the days of the Mission House where we moved when I was four years old. At the time I was born, my father was assistant pastor at Grace Church, then the fashionable Methodist church of downtown Winnipeg. There he carried on the regular routine of Sunday sermons, young people's work, pastoral visiting. Life was comfortable and secure and he enjoyed the esteem of his fellow-citizens.

But he could not forget the sights he had seen in London's East End during his years as a student in England. Misery and poverty had made those appalling slums during the very time that England's growing industry and commerce were piling up fabulous wealth in other parts of the city. Expansion and riches had gone hand in hand with degradation and poverty to make the largest metropolis in the world. Now here was Winnipeg, gateway to the West, expanding rapidly and becoming rich. At the same time people were pouring in from all over the world, poor people driven to seek the security in the New World that the industrial revolution had taken away in the Old.

What about these people? Did no one care that they were crowding together into Winnipeg's fast-growing slums? Did no one realize that in Winnipeg, in Canada, we were starting down the same road that had led to the slums of London?

### *By Way of Introduction*

There was no need for it. Miles and miles of wide prairie stretching in all directions gave space and sunlight and freedom. Yet unless something were done quickly we would soon have all the old evils reproduced in Canada.

Father thought about this problem constantly. He talked it over with Mother. A few years later in his book, *My Neighbor*, he was to set down the thoughts that would not let him rest.

"If through indifference or selfishness we protest, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' there comes the inexorable reply, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.' Someone is responsible! Every unjustly-treated man, every defenceless woman, every neglected child has a neighbour somewhere. Am I that neighbour?"

He decided that he was that neighbour and immediately proceeded to follow the dictates of his conscience. He did not rest until the Church authorities gave him a chance to work in Winnipeg's North End among the crowds of arriving immigrants. He was appointed to take charge of Maple Street Mission near the C.P.R. station. With very little equipment he set to work to make the Mission a community centre in the fullest sense of the word. His enthusiasm was infectious and within a short time he had established a host of activities. After two years he moved deeper into the North End to establish Stella Avenue Mission where the whole process was repeated. But this time the family moved with him—to the wrong side of the tracks.

I remember quite a bit about the Mission House from the time it started. There was the battle against the cockroaches, something quite alien to our experience and very exciting. There were Grandfather Woodsworth's visits, always marked by some little treat—like the ice-cream we enjoyed, seated on the boxes and crates of the moving. Then while Mother continued to

## *J. S. Woodworth*

cope with the problems of settling. Father worked with tireless energy in the Mission next door. It wasn't long before the whole building was a hive of activity.

I remember the kindergarten, a sunny, happy place where the mothers brought their children, struggling at the same time with winter wrappings and the English language. We children attended that kindergarten and never forgot its brightness and interest. There was the swimming pool in the basement where the cement walls echoed the Tarzan-like yells of boys and girls for whom bathing was an amazing luxury. There was the library whose books had been donated by "more fortunate" people in other parts of the city, that splendid room where I made the acquaintance of *Alice in Wonderland*, looking eagerly at the pictures and longing for the time when I could read the text.

Upstairs there were all sorts of classes, cooking classes where the women made fragrant dishes of all kinds, sewing classes where they sometimes brought their embroidery from the Old Land, exquisite stitching in gorgeous reds and blues and purples. There were the classes in English where my father often taught. I remember watching him as he said slowly to some shy and awkward man who followed his encouraging expression "I get out of bed. I put on my pants. I put on my shirt. I put on my socks. I put on my shoes." He would accompany each sentence with appropriate gestures and wait for the learner to repeat it, often many times, until it became clear that he had grasped its meaning.

On Sundays there were services at the Mission, hymns and talks radiating friendliness. Sometimes on Sunday nights there were lantern slides and talks about them. In the summer there was a fresh air camp on Lake Winnipeg for children otherwise condemned to the baking heat of the city.

Yes, the Mission was a busy place and Father was its dynamo. Stella Avenue Mission and earlier ones were known collectively as "All People's Mission." Father would smile as

### *By Way of Introduction*

he told of one new Canadian's efforts to get his tongue round the name, finally calling it "All Paper Machine" Any description less accurate it would be hard to find!

In course of time, conscious of the need to set a good example in many fields, Father set to work on our garden. I remember him spreading steaming manure in early spring, and planting the seeds, drawing the drills carefully with a stick along a taut string, leaving the empty seed envelope as a marker at the end of the row. Soon the little plants came up and before long we were eating tender green lettuce and plump radishes. Then he had to chase away the big boys who made raids on the garden. I can still see him, running quickly round the corner of the house to scatter the marauders, his eyes very determined under the sailor cap that made him look so much like pictures of the new king. The boys used to shout "King George!" as they disappeared in record time. An earlier resident had armed the top of the fence with broken bottles. He did away with these fortifications, undertaking patrol duty instead.

As other activities got under way at the Mission, the boys left the garden alone. But I don't remember him gardening much. He really didn't like it because he had so many other things to do that seemed more important. However, he always cherished the idea that some day he would acquire a farm and leave the city for good. I've often heard Mother agree laughingly to the farm, provided he would undertake to stay there with her, instead of being off on a speaking trip somewhere.

Father took us for walks about the neighbourhood which was so different from the one we had left. Here the sights and sounds and smells were colourful and vivid. We got used to the bright kerchiefs of the women, the rough sheepskin coats of the men, and everywhere the queer talk we couldn't understand. We got used to the unpaved streets of North Winnipeg, to the children playing about in the mud, and even to seeing pigs and chickens clattering up the dooryards.

We even became accustomed to the flies that swarmed around the garbage heaps in the back lanes or settled on the meat in the crowded little corner-stores. Those pigs and chickens and flies worried my father, he was always indignant that the city authorities did nothing about them.

When we got back home from these walks we would nearly always find someone waiting for help of some kind. The Mission House became a regular First Aid station to cope with all sorts of problems. I can remember one kerchiefed mother coming into the little room where visitors were received. With her was a small child, much bundled up but with nothing on her head. Her mother's excited signs indicated that her toque had been lost and that perhaps my mother could help to find it. Neither mother could speak the other's language, but I remember that our mother discovered the colour of the missing toque by pointing to bits of the wallpaper pattern until finally the woman nodded her head in vigorous assent.

On the wall of this same little room was a poem which Father had put there and which he took later to his office in the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa. One verse began

*"Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
Where the race of men go by"*

And the poem ended

*"Let me live in my house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man."*<sup>\*</sup>

The Mission House was that kind of place. One visitor after a short stay in our home said he thought the verse should be changed. "It seems to me," he remarked, "that you live in a house in the middle of the road and that the race of men go through!"

Mother used to find household help among the young immigrant women. On one occasion she had a German girl in the

<sup>\*</sup> "The House by the Side of the Road" by Sam Walter Foss. "He was a friend to man, and he lived in a house by the side of the road"—Homer.

### *By Way of Introduction*

house Mother knew a little German, but my Grandmother Staples who was visiting us at the time knew no tongue but English, touched with the Irish brogue her forebears had brought to Ontario. Mother was going out one day, but before she went, she carefully taught Grandmother the words necessary to get the baby's bottle. The girl knew the formula for preparing it, Grandmother did not. The baby woke and howled lustily for food. Grandmother couldn't think of the magic words. She tried many combinations of sound, but the girl couldn't understand. Finally in desperation she exclaimed "Do what you did at this time yesterday!"

Mother tells another story of this same German girl whose first name was Emma. We children probably never heard her surname, but that didn't prevent us from reaching our own conclusion. At the Mission House there was much talk of immigrants. One morning shortly after Emma's arrival, Mother heard my five-year-old sister chuckling to me "She didn't know where to set my plate at breakfast." "Who didn't?" I asked. Belva chuckled again and replied "Emma Grunt." Yes, we youngsters could not fail to absorb something of the general atmosphere of the place.

In the busy round of Mission House activities there was one spot where Father could always find quiet and privacy. At the head of the stairs was his study where he retired to read and write and think. No one dreamed of entering the study without knocking. No one thought of knocking except in cases of emergency. Even as we passed the door we walked softly and lowered our voices so as not to disturb him.

Two of the walls of the study were lined with books reaching almost to the ceiling in the old, hand-made, cherry wood bookcases whose shelves fitted together without a single nail. Father was very proud of those bookcases which his father had had made and of the big desk with the bird's-eye maple pigeon-holes and the large white knobs that opened the deep drawers.

The lowest one was known as "The Bottom Drawer" and it held a fascinating collection of curios. There were mineral specimens of various kinds—mica that shone like silver, the blue glint of copper ore, a beautiful bit of amethyst from Cape Blomidon. There were sea-shells of various kinds and birds' eggs that Father had collected when he was a boy. Some very old coins were less interesting—until he told us the stories of how he got them. He held us spellbound, too, while he described the places in the Holy Land where he had found the pressed Bowers in the little book whose covers were made of wood from the Mount of Olives.

There were many other souvenirs in the study. Father didn't live in the past, but he brought his past with him into the present. He had a strong sense of continuity, of being a part not only of what he had met but also of what his ancestors had met, and he drew wisdom and inspiration from these experiences. Right to the end he was to retain the habit of keeping by him objects and ideas which had come out of the significant moments of his life.

From student days at Oxford he had brought a reading-desk, a stand on which one could rest a heavy book. It was beautifully grained carved oak. He often reminded us of how he had inherited his love of beautiful wood from his father, who in turn had come by it through his father, a building contractor and lay preacher. He would often show us a piece of mahogany which he used as a ruler and which, he told us, was from the mantel-piece of the first brick house built in Toronto.

From those days, too, came his grandfather's sword which hung high on the wall. Great-grandfather had carried it in the Rebellion of 1837 when, along with other Toronto Tories, he defended the city against the forces of William Lyon Mackenzie. Father was enormously proud of that sword. It reminded him that his forebears had been prepared to fight for their beliefs and it gave him a sense of family pride. He used to tell us that the only way he could be worthy of his grand-

## *By Way of Introduction*

father was to fight for the new causes of today, even if that meant opposing the very things for which his grandfather had fought.

A souvenir of his childhood was the great Indian bow with the flint-tipped arrows hanging beside it. Back in the 1880's an Indian chief, desperate for food, had given it to a white settler in exchange for a sack of flour. A little papoose cradle worked in colourful beads and a pair of huge buffalo horns, polished till they gleamed like smoky black satin, were vivid reminders that only yesterday had the frontiers of Canada been pushed across the prairies and beyond.

From Switzerland had come a bit of wood-carving that impressed us mightily. Against a rock crouched a great lion, dying, his flank pierced by a spear. Father explained that the lion symbolized some patriots who had died bravely defending a mountain pass against the enemy. Somehow I always associated with that Swiss lion a little bronze head of Savonarola which had come from Italy. He also had died bravely rather than yield.

Another carving was in pale green soapstone and represented the holy family at Bethlehem. From Gethsemane Father had brought a crown of thorns which made us children realize, as no words could have done, the suffering that Jesus had borne.

One other object on the study wall interested me greatly because I had watched him make it himself. He cut a shield from heavy grey cardboard. Then he took a little celluloid ball and with his penknife made four even cuts, leaving the pieces joined. He spread them out on the shield, using a thumbtack to pin down the point of each section. There now appeared a hemisphere with four triangular pieces leading away from it, the whole still joined. Opposite each point he printed words. At the left was, "The Good", at the bottom, "The Beautiful", at the right, "The True", and at the top, "God". He explained to me what it meant and why he had not cut the

## *J. S. Woodworth*

sections apart, but it was many years before I realized how much this little piece of handwork meant in his thinking.

His books were quite a mixture. Many were sermons and religious works. There were quite a number of the British classics—Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Stevenson, and writers like William Morris, John Ruskin and Charles Kingsley. There were American writers — Francis Parkman, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson. English and American poets were represented, also Victor Hugo and some other French and German writers, most of whom had reached the shelves through Mother's interest in those languages. Modern works on sociology and economics were there too, but at that stage these books failed completely to interest us children. There weren't any pictures in them and no stories that the grown-ups could read to us. For that we had to go to Grandfather Woodworth's house to look at the wonderful thick volumes of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, with their exciting pictures and stories of lions across the path, dreadful dark dungeons, and other frightening trials that failed to stop the brave Pilgrim on his way to truth.

## CHAPTER II

### SON OF THE CHURCH

**J**. S. WOODSWORTH was born at "Applewood", near Islington, the farm his mother's people had hewn from the Ontario forest more than half a century before. They were United Empire Loyalists of Dutch ancestry who had come from Pennsylvania, following the American Revolution, to rebuild their lives in the pioneer conditions of the north. His father's people came from Yorkshire, his grandfather being a lay preacher and builder in Toronto, then "Muddy York".

Father told us one proud story about his grandfather Woodsworth that we never forgot. He had prospered in business and one day, when a friend asked him to endorse a note for him, he agreed to do so. His grandmother, when she heard of it, was filled with forebodings, which proved amply justified. The man failed to pay the note, and it took practically everything his grandfather had to make good the loss. He paid every cent, but the result was that his three sons were thrown very early upon their own resources.

Although our grandfather was thus deprived of a chance to go to college, he decided to become a Methodist minister, reading theology under the supervision of the District Chairman. In due course he was ordained and appointed to a charge near Toronto. Here at Islington he met and married Esther Josephine Shaver, a devoted Methodist like himself. It was here at "Applewood" that James, their first child, was born in 1874. Following initial disappointment in having no living children, his parents had earnestly prayed for the gift of a son, dedicating him before his birth to the service of the Lord. So it was that in a very special way James was, as he said later, "born and brought

up in the Methodist Church" Very early he became aware that his parents regarded him as evidence of God's blessing and he shared their sense of responsibility as to his future.

For the first few years after his birth the family moved around Ontario, from one church circuit to another. But Grandfather had the pioneer spirit in him. He had something else—an active conscience. He had heard the call from Western Canada for Christian ministers to help the settlers as they faced the hard tasks of the new land. He felt, in his own words, "that the Church had a part to play in shaping the life and institutions of the new country by the operation of educational, moral and religious forces."

And so the family went west to Portage la Prairie and later to Brandon. Grandfather became first Superintendent of Methodist Missions for Western Canada. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, had declared that the world was his parish. Grandfather's parish wasn't quite so wide, but it extended from the head of the Lakes to the Pacific Ocean. In the early years he had to travel much of it in a buckboard with a team of horses. Grandfather knew his vast territory so well that they said he carried the map of the West in his head. In quieter times toward the end of his life, he was to write his story, *Thirty Years in the Canadian North West*, an interesting record of pioneer Methodism.

James was eight years old when they came west and his vivid memories dated from that time. His boyhood left him with many recollections, bits of which he passed on to us. There was the freedom and sweep of the prairie in all its seasons. James and his younger brothers used to tramp and skate, swim and ride. They had a pony, and a dog which in winter they harnessed to a sled. Their home was always open to travellers from near and far. His mother's offer of a hot bath became almost as well known and welcome to tired wanderers as her good cooking. Sometimes Indians from the nearby prairie would

## *Son of the Church*

find their way to the Woodsworth kitchen, to the great delight of the boys.

God was good and the birth of James had been followed at intervals by that of five other children. Because he was the eldest, and because his father was away so much, James's mother grew to depend on the boy. From his earliest years he had a sense of responsibility unusual even in that day and even in a minister's family. He helped with the work of the household and the upbringing of the younger children to an extent that was hard on him as well as on the younger children, deepening his already serious and intense nature. One of his sisters recalls how he used to insist on perfection in the smallest chores assigned to the children. Of course he always exacted the same thoroughness of himself. He had his mother's tremendous vitality and will, her capacity for sustained hard work that failed only when long years had worn the physical frame to the point where even the driving spirit could no longer command obedience.

He remembered the Saturday routine of blacking the eight pairs of boots and setting them out ready for church service next day, his mother's preparation of all the cooking in readiness for the day of rest, the clearing away of the chores so that when Sunday dawned it was a day of quietness and devotion, filled with church services and other activities proper to the Sabbath. These included family "sings" around his mother's little melodeon on which he himself used to practise. They sang hymns,—*"Safely Through Another Week"* being one of his mother's favourites, while his father always loved *"How Firm a Foundation"*. On Sunday afternoons James and the others would take walks or write letters to relatives or read books suitable for the day.

In common with other Methodists, the Woodsworth family strove for simplicity and strict self-discipline in personal habits. There was a home in which there was neither smoking nor drinking, card-playing nor dancing, rough language nor rowdy

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behaviour. It was a home in which they tried to live as they felt Christ would want them to live. But it was also a home where negative virtues were balanced by positive good deeds. Along with rigid self-discipline went habits of helping those in trouble, praying for those who had fallen from right ways of living, being good neighbours in the circle of the community.

We have a record of James's adolescence, set down in his own handwriting. One day in 1940, when I was helping with the final move from Winnipeg, my father handed me some old papers to destroy. Among them, preserved through more than half a century of family wandering, was a small, red-covered diary with worn corners and gilt lettering. 1891. I begged for the little book and he gave it to me, amused yet pleased that I wanted to save it.

James was sixteen when he bought that diary in Brandon. It covers the year marking the end of his high school days and the beginning of college. The first part tells of a visit to Ontario, lasting till the middle of March. The record is faithfully kept, day by day, the writing careful and rather cramped. With the return to Brandon and familiar scenes, the pages show long vacant stretches, broken by the description of two prairie trips with his father. The final section is also sporadic. It tells of his first ten days at Wesley College, Winnipeg, and some of the pencilled entries are almost illegible.

The diary begins with a memorandum from 1890:

"Left Brandon Dec. 17th intending to spend 3 mos. in the east. During that time to see the principal cities in Ontario and Quebec and all the sights I possibly could. Left Barrie Dec. 31 and came to Toronto. That afternoon saw the Market and Walker's large clothing store beside other large buildings in that quarter of the city. Later on went to Cyclorama representing the battle of Gettysburg. It is wonderful what a pleasing delusion is presented to one."

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James had lost no time in starting to see all the sights he possibly could. He had four more days in Toronto. He crammed them with sightseeing and the amazing zest for new impressions that remained with him till the end of his life. Here is how he spent January 1, Thursday

"Began the New Year at a watchnight service in Bloor St. Methodist Church. After Breakfast went to see one of the fire halls and had a rather exciting experience. Went to see Musée in afternoon. It is a pity such prominence is given to Criminal Characters. In the evening went to hear an admirable [admirable?] programme of music and reading."

The next day

"Spent most of Friday walking around City. Saw Normal School, Book Room, and Mission Rooms and St. John's Hospital. Also saw Eaton's immense store. It is like a great and complex machine. Saw the three churches, Metropolitan, Broadway Tabernacle, and Trinity. Went to Queen's Park and reviewed University and Parliament Buildings and site of Victoria [College]."

Saturday was spent in much the same way, and on Sunday

"In morning went to Bloor St. Church and heard Dr. Maxwell. In afternoon saw Sherbourne St. Church and horticultural buildings and attended service in the Auditorium. Went to Elm St. Church in the evening and heard Mr. Starr."

Bright and early Monday morning James left Toronto for Brampton where he went to his Aunt Gina's for dinner. Brampton was scarcely a show place, but we find the entry "In afternoon went around the town and saw the various stores and the post office." The following day he left for Barrie where the family was to stay. The day he started to school his diary reads

"This morning was started to Barrie High School. In starting to a new school one is able to realize some of Dickens' descriptions. In evening attended a Farmers' institute and saw a no. of farmers."

During his stay in Barrie, James took a keen interest in his studies, particularly in experimental science. He wrote

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"In our Chemistry and Physics classes we have the apparatus for trying nearly every experiment described in the books . . . It is nice to be able to verify everything stated."

He tells of a teacher letting him look through a microscope at sections of flowers and the root-cap of a stalk of corn, commenting "It is really wonderful the sensation produced." He relates how he found some beautiful specimens of bird's-eye maple and made a resolve to preserve some samples of Ontario woods.

But young James was interested in many other things besides study. The diary is full of entries about winter sports and social events in which he participated with enthusiasm. There are descriptions of the countryside which was such a contrast to the flat prairie

"It is pretty country around here. Although the trees are bare, and the snow covers the fields, the pines, spruces and hemlocks, together with the hills, fences and houses make it look different from the bald prairie."

His critical faculties were developing

"In the country the Sundays appear to be about the only day in which there is anything going on. Although there is only one service a day, this lasts long enough for two, so the people have an abundance of service." And again "Read most of the morning and went to church in afternoon. The Sunday School is just before the service. It is a great pity more life is not infused into both the teachers and the lesson. The same want of life is also observed in class."

Toward the end of February there was a visit to Niagara Falls, and early in March a two-day trip to Montreal filled with vigorous sightseeing. A week later the family left for the West, arriving in Brandon on March 13, when the diary reads

"Saw our horse for the first time and had a drive. The buildings do not look so grand as when I left though some are very nice."

Three days later he was back at Brandon Collegiate and "in the



*Reuben - Boston*

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evening I went to hear the memorial services celebrating the centennial of Wesley's death." The diary records events "The last day or two we have had a cow up on trail. To-day we bought her, paying \$35 00. She is giving a little over 12 quarts per day. The snow is beginning to melt rapidly now and there is poor sleighing." A few days later "Went to a lecture by Dr. Lane. Subject 'Woman'. As a lecturer one good point is the irony with which he emphasizes statements." And early in April "Tried my gun this afternoon. The cartridges I have seem to be too small for it so I suppose I will have to get larger."

There follows a blank of almost two weeks and then some entries describing a trip he took with his father.

April 9 "Rolled out early to-day. Struck camp, hitched up and jogged away over the prairie. Went on to Cussed Creek and struck the trail to Devil's Lake."

April 25 "At night held up at a Danish settlement and were very warmly received by the MOSQUITOES. Got our horses into the house. Pitched our tent and all night I fought mosquitoes. This night is beyond description. It will not need any for me to remember it."

Those mosquitoes must have been too much for James. The diary is blank until August 4 when it records "We had the S.S. Picnic to-day at Plum Creek. Had a good time. A great crowd present." A week later came a ten-day trip, following which the diary says on August 23

"The people in Brandon all seem to have very white faces and to them we look very dark. The skin is also peeling. Had a good time to-day. Everything appears quite city-like in contrast with the life we have been living lately."

The next day's entry is in pencil and very faint.

"I think that likely I will go down to Wesley College for winter. Pa will interview Dr. Spurling and if he thinks it suitable I shall go."

Evidently the principal of Wesley College did think it suitable, for the next entry, September 21, reads:

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"As the time draws near for me to leave home I feel more and more what a separation means. Ma regards this as a separation and consequently one of the hardest trials of her life."

Two days later James, now seventeen, left home for Winnipeg, entering Wesley College next morning and commencing the following day

"Have decided to take Greek as an optional subject. Had a good time to-day. I think I shall like college life."

That was on Friday. On Monday he wrote

"To-day I just got down to study and kept at it pretty steady. I got up about half past five and studied. Also studied after school and in the evening. It was raining in the afternoon."

On Tuesday

"To-day saw a phonograph for the first time. It is not a large machine. Greek is hard." On Wednesday "Had a good football practice to-night. Heard from Ma. Went to Mrs. Scotts for a while this evening and afterwards to prayer meeting."

The diary's last entry is on October 2, and concerns Winnipeg's famous gumbo, a change from the dusty sandhills of Brandon.

"The week seems to have gone quickly. I went up to the top of city hall. There is a good view. In Winnipeg a fine day seems the exception. All others—mud—mud—mud."

James spent four years at Wesley College, graduating in Arts in 1896 in the Department of Mental and Moral Science. The year's delay came from a shortage of funds which necessitated a brief normal school course and a year's teaching in the country. He always valued this experience for the maturity it gave him. Later he was to advise a similar break in the university work of his children.

He found time for football and was able to win a place on the college team. Some verses he dedicated "To Our Football Club" survive in his handwriting. The thirteen stanzas include one for each member of the eleven, sandwiched between the following first and last verses

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"St. John's we've met and conquered  
On a well-fought battle field,  
And next Saturday decides if we  
The wooden spoon shall yield

"So boys play up like heroes  
And lay those school chumps out,  
You can do it if you want to—  
Of that there's not a doubt."

James may not have been much of a poet, but there is no doubt that he was a popular, all-round student, excelling in study, sport and social activities. In his final year he was awarded the highest student honour, the Senior Stick. This was a gold-headed walking-stick, presented each year to the top man of the class and bearing a plate engraved with his name.

Following graduation James showed no uncertainty about his future course. His father and grandfather had been ministers in the Methodist Church. He had been brought up in that environment and knew no other. To the deep satisfaction of his parents, he felt impelled to carry on the same work, saying in later years "With me it was not a case of entering the Church. I was born and brought up in the Methodist Church and easily found my way into its ministry."

He spent the next two years on probation in the mission field in south-western Manitoba. His letters to his mother are full of his work. He flung himself with zest into every phase of it, from preaching to financing the local church. Like his father he travelled by buckboard or on horseback. His letters describe blinding blizzards, choking dust-storms, roads in all states of peril. He visited each home in his scattered district, regardless of its religious affiliation, eager to be of service and determined to bring every possible soul into close contact with the Methodist Church. He enjoyed preaching.

"Yesterday was a beautiful day and there were good congregations all around. Preached on 'True Worship—God is a Spirit and

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they that worship must worship in spirit and in truth' Had a very good time."

Again

"On Sunday I preached from the text 'Thou Shalt Not Steal' We have less thieves here than in Brandon but occasional sharp practices, gambling, etc., afford ground for such an exhortation."

James enjoyed preaching, but it was as a teacher that he excelled. Following his death almost half a century later, there appeared in the *United Church Observer* a letter by one who had experienced his teaching as a small boy and who had retained the lesson as an indelible memory of his youth. Related by W. R. Donogh of Rivers, Manitoba, the following little incident dates from the time of James Woodsworth's probation. It shows not only his great gifts as a teacher, but also his complete disregard for the size of his audience—characteristics which became increasingly impressive with the years. Here is the letter.

"Mr. Woodsworth was the student pastor on our little country field consisting of points called Huntingdon, Bethel and Breeze-lawn. It was in the old Methodist days when the midweek service was looked upon as part of the regular services of the church. It was the busy harvest season. My brother, my cousin and I went to prayer meeting because we were too small to be any use at home. We three constituted the total congregation that night. Mr. J. S. Woodsworth and his brother Joseph, who was visiting him, arrived at the schoolhouse (Huntingdon) and conducted the service. Joseph played the organ and James taught us several hymns. He had us seated up in a corner near the organ in a space designated for the choir. I remember sitting on the hard choir bench and my feet would not touch the floor.

"He taught us several hymns. Outstanding among the hymns was 'Jesus, Lover of my Soul'. He illustrated those lines

*'Cover my defenceless head  
With the shadow of thy wing.*

by the story of a farmstead that had burned down. After the fire the owner was walking about the scene of the burning. In the out

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starts of the farmyard he found a mother hen, not burned but smothered, huddled down in death. He picked her up and, to his surprise, her flock of chickens scattered unharmed from beneath her wings. Then Mr. Woodsworth reminded us that the great sacrifices of life have been inspired by great love, that the way of love may also be the way of great suffering."

Preaching and teaching, however, were the least exhausting features of James's work. In all weathers he visited the homes, some of which appalled him physically as well as morally. After one such experience he wrote his mother

"One place I would like you or Mary [his sister] to go to. I had been there once before. Everything untidy around and dirty inside. How many children? Twelve. Yes, twelve living. I dared not ask the number of the dead. Just a little shanty. They must surely all have to turn over together at night. Only one line of boards—like the rough ones on shanty

"Twelve years ago [the man] bought a binder, price \$250. Has already paid \$400 on it and the Co. claim \$80 more. That is the way interest goes. He is now on his fourth binder and all still unpaid for. Same with most of his implements. But no good to see him as he is not worth anything.

"Wheat only about 8 bus. to acre this year. That gives seed, pays for threshing and flour for bread. Cash income last year \$15.50. Still plenty to eat. They killed 16 or 17 pigs since last fall.

"Woman was going about with bare feet and an old waist and a skirt or petticoat failing to connect by some inches. Her face, otherwise not so bad, made repulsive by a thick neck as big as her face. Nurturing child No. 12, five weeks old. Children were all bright-looking.

"I was going to leave but found I could not without offending. So had to stay to tea. Had to shut my teeth hard at the thought but it was not so bad. The room was a little dirty and so the old sheet which was put on in my honour did not look so badly.

"But what was worse than the poor condition of the house was the spiritual condition of the inmates. The father, a member of the church, is not living as he ought to do. He knows and acknowledges that trouble is likely the just reward of his way of living.

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Still has not sufficient will or backbone or courage or something to do what he knows to be right. He hopes to some day reach Heaven but 'if he goes to Hell he will try not to blame God for it'. Certainly this sentiment makes one laugh (or cry) at his ignorance. Still there is hope for such a man. Used to have family worship, but through a quarrel with his wife, who rather scoffed at it, gave it up. Children are not taught any spiritual truths and as they are not very well-dressed are generally kept home from Sunday School. I am afraid our children know very little how much they have to be thankful for."

On another occasion he wrote

"Visited two men who are very sick and cannot live much longer. One has consumption. He is getting very weak. It is wonderful what a change there is in his attitude towards religion since he became sick. Last summer when I called he almost insulted me. Now he is very glad apparently to have me visit him. He is feeling his way into greater light.

"The other man is in a miserable condition -dying of cancer. Had his tongue cut out last summer and yet there are three great cancers on his neck. He and his son have been bawling it. He is lying half-dressed in a little bunk in a corner of the shanty. Everything is filthy and disgusting. I advised him to get his business affairs in shape and go to the hospital. He knows he cannot live long."

On that particular Sunday morning James had risen at 6.30 and was on the road at 8.30. Having made the two visits just described, he went to the school-house but found no scholars for Sunday School. He preached and then, receiving a note from the church steward, visited him. Following this, he called upon a sick woman. "Then, as I had not time for dinner, drove to afternoon appointment, preaching service and fellowship meeting. Supper and drive, and again preaching service and fellowship meeting in the evening." From his letters thus appears to have been a fairly typical Sunday, yet a few weeks later he wrote, quite seriously, of his fear that "laziness is going to be my worst enemy."

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On the other hand he always worried because his mother refused to be lazy. In his college days he had written her

"Received your letter on Wednesday. You have been overworking yourself again. I ought endeavour once more to persuade you that all the work you do in the way of cleaning, etc., is not absolutely necessary. But I shall not try. But even if it is necessary under ordinary circumstances, there are things that are more so. It is not right for you to wear yourself out as you are doing."

After several more paragraphs urging her to take things more easily, he proposed an alternative.

"Lately I have been wondering what to do between exams and Convocation. I had about made up my mind to stay here in the city [Winnipeg]. The cost will be about the same in either case. But the last day or so I have about changed my mind. If you can give me anything to do at home that will make it worth while to come home, I think I will do so. There is no reason why you should not leave the heavy part of the housecleaning till that week. The spring is late and there is no special need for getting it done earlier. It would just suit me to go in for a little of that kind of work now."

During his time in the mission field, he returned to the same topic but philosophically and with humour.

"You always seem to be worrying about the work. I do wish you would take things easy. Out here we never worry about anything. You train the calf to bawl for its milk on the stroke of six, but most of the farmers give their stock supper somewhere between ten and twelve. You get up during the night, while here any time before ten is early. If you could only learn to 'sit and sing yourself away' for a few hours every day, it would be a decided improvement."

Trumbull writes somewhere on the duty of making oneself use less. This is the lesson you ought to learn. The school-teacher ought to impart all he knows to his pupil, even though he then is of no further use. The tradesman ought to train his apprentice, so that the apprentice no longer requires his assistance. So you ought to get Harold [his youngest brother] to look after the cow and calf, Mary to cook and Edith [his younger sister] to do her own hair—and thus render yourself useless along these lines. There would be a double

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benefit. You would have time for something more congenial, while Harold would love the cow, Mary learn how to light a fire, and Edith would get her hair cut short."

But if James's letters to his mother reveal glints of sunshine and humour, his diary for this period shows a fairly grim pre-occupation with sin and holiness. He worried about the members of his flock in a way almost incomprehensible a generation later.

"The old woman here to-day was expressing her views on religion. She apparently has no thought of the awful reality of the next world and the responsibilities and privileges of this life. To hear a woman say she would gladly exchange the chance of happiness in the next world for a few of this world's pleasures and goods is dreadful. Many implicitly act on this belief and some men dare in a profane and blasphemous manner to express such an awful condition, but for an old woman to do so seems indeed infinitely worse."

He took a serious view of some of his parishioners' personal habits, a perspective so remote from to-day's world that it seems almost ludicrous to read in the diary.

"Then had a long talk with a man of twenty-five or thirty. He knows he is not living as he ought. Tobacco is what keeps him from Christ. He has tried in vain to give it up. I got him to promise to give it up in God's strength and to make a solemn covenant with God about the matter."

But if the young minister worried about the sins of his flock, he was far less tolerant about his own spiritual shortcomings. His diary shows him in a constant state of turmoil about them.

"Last night led the prayer meeting here in Brandon for the first time. I seemed directed to read Gal. V, but although receiving a blessing through doing my duty, something was lacking. I was not walking in the spirit as I had promised to walk . . .

"To-day, thanks be unto God, He has led me to see the absolute necessity of removing my hand in shame and contrition from the

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altar where I have been almost ready to draw away part of the sacrifice already presented to God. May I never fall away."

He yearned to be chosen for some unrewarding and difficult task which would test to the uttermost his consuming desire to work for the Lord.

"I do not pray to be an eloquent and popular preacher or a profound scholar, but Oh that God would use me as an instrument through which the Holy Spirit may speak to the people. If only I might win souls for Christ! If God calls me to give up home, friends and future prospects and go to some remote band of poor Indians, I pray that I may have a willing heart and be able to say 'Here am I, O Lord, send me.'"

Sometimes he was tempted by the lure of the foreign mission field, but always he was steadied by that guiding idea which was to be with him all his life—that for him, responsibility began at home and that the job of working in his own community—be it Carnevale or Canada—was the one he must do.

One entry in his diary, written at Carnevale when he was twenty-two, projects a long shadow into his future. It was, perhaps, his first suspicion that the basis of society might leave something to be desired. It was a fleeting suspicion and was quickly brushed aside. But its seed remained, to be fallow until the slums of London caused it to germinate and grow into one of the overshadowing ideas of his life. He wrote

"Had quite a conversation with Hughes. He is the type of the comparatively uneducated class—narrow and bigoted and jealous of upper classes. Still there is a good deal of truth in many of the complaints of such people. From their standpoint the wealthy seem to have little right to their riches. 'If I work as hard as a lawyer I ought to have the same reward', is the principle. They forget or rather cannot comprehend the different abilities—the quality as well as quantity. Still when a man is struggling away making a bare living and sees others living in luxury from profits made in business transactions with him, he is apt to think there is

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something wrong. Still in my own case I am not envious of those wealthy business men I have met."

This last remark was very true. Never, at any time during his life did J. S. Woodsworth envy the possessors of wealth.

The two years of probation were almost over. A letter written in May, 1898, tells his mother of a resolution passed at his church Board Meeting, asking to have his services for another year. James commented: "One appreciates this as a recognition of good-will even though next year is to be spent at college."

That fall he enrolled at Victoria College, Toronto, as a divinity student plunging into a year of heavy study. At Wesley College he had complained that Greek was hard, now he found Hebrew even more difficult. But it was compulsory and in any case he was determined to make a thorough study of his subject. That fall he met his future wife though he had no inkling of the fact then nor for several years. His two first cousins, Clare Woodsworth and Charlie Sissons, were boarding in the same home and also attending Victoria College. That fall they were joined by a college friend of Clare's, Lucy Staples, a rather dignified young lady who had taught school for several years before enrolling the previous fall with Clare at Victoria College. Questioned half a century later about her first reaction to the arrival of James Woodsworth, Lucy smiled. "I was deeply disappointed that this cousin from the West had to come and board where we were boarding." Having expressed her disappointment to Clare, Lucy remembered that her friend had been reassuring. "She said he was a quiet boy given to philosophical studies and she didn't think he'd bother us much."

They met first at the table. Later there were walks and social outings together. To Lucy's surprise, James fitted very well into their little group. "The Four" made a well rounded circle, and before the term was far advanced they were on the way to close friendship—an active and growing relationship cherished by all four and which remained intact until the death of James.

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made the first break. Death was far from their thoughts as the college term slipped by far too quickly, filled with study, pleasant social contacts, and activities of many kinds. It was impossible for James to dwell on the sorrow of parting with his friends, for ahead of him shone the exciting prospect of a year's post-graduate study at Oxford.

## CHAPTER III

### STUDENT AT OXFORD

ON a fine October morning in the year 1899 a young Canadian sat in the lounge of the S.S. *Californian* writing a letter. He was in his middle twenties, of medium height and build, with dark brown hair and moustache. His hazel eyes were alight with vitality and interest as he watched the banks of the St. Lawrence river glide by and thought of the unknown experiences ahead.

"Dear Mother," he wrote

"It is only 11 o'clock yet and we will not touch Quebec till late this afternoon, but I may as well have a note ready if there is any opportunity to post it. Am going to manage very nicely in 2nd cabin. Meals will be alright. There is not a large passenger list.

"You ought to have seen the loading last night. It was apparently one of utter confusion but I suppose each man knew just what he was doing. The officers all appear to be Englishmen. You ought to hear the English accents. One old sailor looks just like the pictures one sees. He has a nose the size of a fair potato and as red as a beet. Already I am becoming quite familiar with such expressions as 'Cast off y'r port guy', 'down the hatch', 'there's some tackle there', 'aye sir', 'belaying pin', etc., etc. There was an awful jumble of Cockney English and Lower Canadian French last night. . . This morning I have been enjoying the quaint old settlements along the river."

Ten days later a somewhat chastened voyager wrote from the Irish Sea a short while before the ship reached Liverpool. "The boat is very safe but rolled horribly," he recorded. He had been in his bunk for four days and away from the table for nearly

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a week. The first Sunday, while the ship was yet in calm water, he had officiated at the religious service, but after that he had seen practically nothing of the other passengers. Now, however, he was beginning to enjoy life again, and was looking forward to reaching Oxford the following night.

James Woodsworth had begun his great adventure of experiencing the Old Country. During the next ten months he would write some seventy letters home to his mother, his father, his sisters and brothers and his grandmother. Into these letters he poured full descriptions of the things he saw and the emotions and ideas they aroused within him. At his request the letters were carefully preserved as a diary of his trip. After half a century they still breathe the freshness and exuberance of youth.

Before he left Canada, James had planned exactly how he would spend his year. From time to time he explained in his letters that he had not come to study books. He could do that at home. Nor had he come to bury himself in the scholastic life of Oxford. A letter to his father dated January 22, 1900, told of his wider purposes.

"Really I am very glad to say that I have carried out my plan without a hitch. The general outline that I made before starting would do now for my diary. But what do you think of the arrangement? And of the kind of places and sights and people that I have chosen to become acquainted with? So many courses lie before me that it is absolutely necessary to map out something definite. Now what criticism do you give? What suggestions re future?

"I may give out or two principles that have guided me. To do what I can't do in Canada. To study life rather than do places. To gain as many points of view as possible—more especially to see what may be helpful later. To get a fair idea of the principles of the religious and educational and social problems and work, and to try to understand the spirit which characterizes the whole system.

"To this end I have sought successively to identify myself as closely as possible for as long a period as I could spare, with some

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particular phase of life. Then in order to keep up my interest which constant sightseeing is apt to deaden, and at the same time to compare various phases, I have sought as great contrasts as possible."

From the ship James went straight to Oxford, travelling for most of a day across England. His letter written that night is a series of exclamations about the old weather-beaten stone houses, the old-fashioned streets and older-fashioned stores, the fields of every conceivable shape with hedges, ditches and walls dividing them, the curious railway carriages, the necessity of tipping everyone for the slightest service, tea in his hotel room by the light of a candle. "It all seems like dreamland and I wonder sometimes just where I am, or how I got here and how it will all end."

During the next few days he got settled at Oxford. He decided not to matriculate into the University because it would be too expensive, would take too much of his time, and would hedge him about with too many restrictions in dress, lodgings, hours, ability to leave the city, and so on. Having made this decision, he was able to find an "unlicensed" lodging-house which was cheaper than those recognized by the University. After some bargaining with the landlady, he struck an arrangement by which he could get two rooms, fire, light and board for 19 shillings a week. The usual practice was for the lodger to choose his menu daily, but James stipulated that the landlady prepare and serve him what she saw fit. "I do not take to this ordering plan," he commented. Nor did he take to the English afternoon tea plan, but for the most part stuck stoutly to the Canadian custom of three meals a day.

He attached himself to Mansfield College where he arranged to take lectures in theology from Dr. Fairbairn. Having heard a lecture from Dr. Caird at Balliol, he sought and obtained permission to attend his lectures in philosophy. "I was more than delighted with my success," he wrote his mother. "Dr. Caird is the best man in the philosophical world in England. . . I should like to get admission to one or two other lectures but

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do not want many The information really is the smallest part of the benefit."

James bought a guide book and set out to see Oxford Years of reading had prepared him for its historical and literary associations, but he was almost overwhelmed by the total effect of the layers of history piled on every inch of the ground, and by the wealth of beauty and culture wherever he looked. "Milton must have seen Oxford when he gave his idea of Paradise," he wrote, and added

"To-day as I sat amid the most beautiful shrubbery and trees, surrounded by the ivy-banked walls—with the blackened old towers seen through the soft hazy air—and heard the chimes and thought of some of the historic associations, I felt simply lost The whole was almost overpowering to anyone who had any sense whatever of the aesthetic."

His letters are full of wonder that he should actually be visiting places like Christ Church College in whose Hall dramatic representations had been witnessed by Elizabeth, James I and Charles I, and whose students had included men like Lord Elgin, Sir Robert Peel, John Locke, Ben Jonson, Sir Philip Sydney, Mr Gladstone and John and Charles Wesley. Then, "On the way home I passed and stood upon the spot where Ridley and Latimer were martyred" Later, following a visit to the Indian Institute with its historic and artistic treasures, he wrote in despair "Oh, how little one feels he knows! Music, art, painting, sculpture, architecture, I know nothing of Why, what a life study there is in heraldry alone Crests, coats-of-arms are everywhere, and paintings look down upon you from every wall."

But he was careful not to live too much in the past. He tells of being out on the Cherwell and the Isis in a canoe with a fellow-Canadian, paddling Canadian fashion, vigorously, from a kneeling position. "Here they sit flat in the bottom and poke along," he observed Used to the clear weather and occasional

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downpours of Manitoba, the habitual English drizzle bothered him a bit, he confessed to his sister Mary

"So far I try to keep Canadian customs though I may have to change. To-day I happened to have my umbrella. Would put it up for five minutes. Then down for the next five. No one minds a little rain here so I try to think I don't either."

It was during the fall term that he got his first jolt about English Methodism. He attended a meeting of the Oxford Wesley Guild, a society of Wesleyan university students, and was shocked to hear the view that the Methodist Church had practically no place in English higher education, and that her ministers had little culture. It is so strange to find only a few Wesleyan students here at this great University and hear even these adopting such an apologetic tone. But how they do quote Wesley! As the year progressed, he was called upon to take a number of church services at country points. As he saw the tiny congregations and noted the class distinction between pastor and flock, he was forced more and more to the conclusion that Methodism was no longer the living force that had once roused the common people of England.

"Wesley" had been one of the most revered names in the Woodsworth home, and during the Christmas vacation James made a long-planned pilgrimage to the scenes of Wesley's life and work in London and at Epworth. He visited every spot, meditated upon every association, described it all meticulously in his letters. He asked his sister Mary "Now have I not been zealous in finding out the memorials of Wesley—his home, his college, his chapel and later home, and his grave?" Knowing how much this visit would have meant to his mother, he wrote her

"But really it was wonderful to stand in this old room where Wesley had spent so many hours of prayer and used to look across to the chapel which had been the centre of his labours. I know I appreciated it a great deal, but I know you could have done so in a ten-fold greater degree."

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The fall term passed quickly, packed with lectures, sight-seeing, walks to nearby places of interest, a cycling tour with another Canadian to Stratford-on-Avon with its Shakespeare shrine and through beautiful Warwickshire with its associations of Sir Walter Scott's Kenilworth. Then there was his one contact with royalty as described to his brother Richard:

"Perhaps my Wednesday's experience will prove interesting. I had to miss two of the few lectures I do take, but I had a chance to see what I shall not see again. In one carriage the Emperor of Germany, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught and a New York girl. I ought to say the Duchess of Marlborough.\* Quite a combination! It was interesting to see the splendid horses and the liveried attendants. I have no doubt the Duchess felt that she had achieved quite a triumph. If only I could see the Queen now I would not want to see any more Royalty."

The term drew to its close, and with it the first phase of James's English experience. He looked back over a great store of impressions: his debt to the past for beauty and culture and ideas, his comparison of modern England with modern Canada, the great privilege of being able to take from England the best she could offer and use it in the service of Canada. There was something else. England had emerged from the mists of imagination. She was something real and solid and of this world. Her great men had left the pages of books and were alive in lecture rooms and pulpits. As he said in one letter:

"Yesterday Dr. Fairbairn gave quite an interesting account of one time when he met Mr. Herbert Spencer the great philosopher at breakfast at Mr. Gladstone's. Dr. Fairbairn was criticizing Mr. Spencer's works most unmercifully. It seems to make these great authors very real to have them spoken of in such a matter-of-course way."

Already the foundations of orthodoxy were being sapped in James Woodsworth's mind. Never again would he accept any belief without question. Six months later he wrote to his mother:

\* *Constance Vanderbilt.*

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"You know one of the things that impresses me most is the sense of actuality of the intellectual conflicts, the actuality of the great writers. I mean these men no longer seem so far off. They are just like other men. There is no longer an absolute bar between these great authorities and me. I cannot idealize them as I used to do. Their opinions are not nearly so weighty in themselves. Yet what they lose in one way they gain in another, for I can better sympathize and really understand them and read their works more in the light in which they were written."

If the first six weeks of England had brought unsettling and exciting experiences, the next six were to prove even more momentous. On December 11 James arrived for a fortnight at Mansfield House in the East End of London. As he explained later, Mansfield House Settlement was managed largely by Mansfield College men and drew its residents largely from that college. His first experiences were bewildering.

Here was a comfortable residence staffed by men of culture and distinction. The warden was well known, his wife "a very fine lady—a medical doctor. Guy Pearce—son of Mark Guy Pearce (the well known preacher) is one of the workers. Lawrence—a son or nephew of Sir Somebody is an author of social books and at present hard at work on one. The men here have been all over the world, have a good grasp of social and political and religious questions, and there is the utmost friendliness and freedom. As one joins the circle around the fire in the common room where they adjourn after dinner, he hears everything freely discussed. One may not agree with many things, but I am delighted to see this phase of English life."

The residence was located in one of the worst slum areas of London. James took a walk with another man at night.

"On each side of the street for over half a mile, between the street and the shops, was a long row of hawkers' carts. There you found everything. Each cart had flaring gas jets. It was a busy scene but so strange! You could buy nearly everything. The cries were bewitching and the cockney accent very amusing.

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"Here you saw, even early in the evening when we were there, the drunken men singing along the streets. The sullenly-looking women hurrying along with their shawls drawn over their heads. The men, women and children drinking in the gin palaces. I stepped inside one door and it seemed to me that one woman was giving drink to her young baby."

The activities of Mansfield House were very puzzling to James. It was obviously not a City Mission doling out food and shelter. He visited boys clubs where they were busy reading, smoking or playing billiards—these last two activities, under the auspices of a Church College, coming as a distinct shock to James. From these clubs,

"then on to the 'Wave', the Settlement lodging-house. Here they give beds from 4d up and the men buy halfpennys worth of tea, sugar, etc., and cook their own meals. Most of them are the very lowest class of people. We are near the great docks and they get the dockers and such casual labourers. You would scarcely care to sleep or eat here but this is splendid compared to the low dives which I understand most men have to stop at."

On Sunday afternoon "there was a meeting in the Hall called the P.S.A.—Pleasant Sunday Afternoon—a political or social rather than a religious meeting. At 6.30 we had a religious service in the Hall. Then immediately afterwards at 8 o'clock came a lecture on Turkey in Europe. During the day at other places there were classes—some on the Bible, on sociology, on Shakespeare, and I know not what all."

This kind of thing in the slums, carried on by a Church College was something very new and strange to James. A few years later he was to reproduce all its essential features in the slums of North Winnipeg. But even during these first days he grasped something of the reason for the non-church approach.

"The ordinary religious meetings fail to reach certain classes and these men are trying to help them. I cannot now discuss methods. I cannot yet understand them. I am trying to study the whole thing which is certainly a sincere effort to uplift humanity."

The days which followed gave him further insight into the appalling poverty of East London. He went to see 350 poor school children given a practically free dinner and was drawn into helping serve the noisy crowd. Each child got a plate and a half of soup, a large piece of bread, and as he went out, a piece of bread and treacle. "In spite of the disgust which the greed of the children was apt to give one, it was pathetic to see the eagerness with which the little lads watched me pouring out the soup or pleading for just a little more of the thicker soup near the bottom." Then there was the evening the lawyers came to the Settlement to give free legal advice. Some people were in debt, others had people owing them. Some had quarrels bringing out various evil things. "One of the saddest cases was that of a man with a family of five children who had a drunken wife who sold the very clothes of the children for drink. The lawyer said that legally he was helpless, and referred him to the Salvation Army."

But even worse experiences were to come. James went to visit a young pastor at a little church in North East London who was that day distributing tickets for a free dinner on Christmas day. The two men made the rounds of the parish together.

"It was really sickening to see the poverty and distress. We were in several homes where they had not had any dinner that day. One woman was working button-holes at a ha'penny a hole and a farthing for a small button-hole. She told me there were 70 stitches around. Another woman was making match-boxes at 1 forget exactly how much—a few pence a gross. One child was lying very ill—tap disease. I think the poor little girl was dying. Her poor old grandmother showed me her own arm. It was only skin drawn over the bone. Some of the small back rooms upstairs were enough to kill anyone. Outside it was as bad. There was a heavy fog. The smoke would not rise. The streets were dirty and muddy. I do not wonder at people being driven to despair. Of course a good share of the poverty is due to improvidence and drunkenness but that does not

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make it any the less real or pitiable. Then it seems that nothing permanent can be done. One can give a few coppers—alleviate the distress a little—that is all. Thousands of people in this district are doomed to drag out such a life of misery."

From these dreadful scenes James went north to the little village of Blyth, Rotherham, to spend Christmas with the parents of a young man he had known in Canada. The quiet, the cleanliness and order, the simple hospitality of the elderly couple in this remote village stood out in contrast alike with the crowded culture of Oxford and the damning decay of the London slums. Contrasts continued when, during the first week of January, he attended an international student missionary conference in London. His hosts were well-to-do people living in West London, a couple and their daughter, "not a large family but I notice that four servants come in to prayers." Then back to his pastor friend in North East London where he found himself dreading the sight of such poverty and its effect on the human spirit.

"One evening here . . . I went to a mothers' meeting social evening. Poor women! I have not yet become accustomed to the discouraged, ignorant-looking—in many cases degraded appearance of the women in the poor parts of London. Then in so many cases they have that cringing manner that has come of long years of pauperizing. There are many cases of Unsh Hesp."

From this time forward James would always be conscious of the poverty and misery that accompany the growth of great cities. Never again could he contemplate beauty and culture without being aware of the human wreckage that is everywhere in the back streets and hidden places. Never again could he enjoy the good things of life without, at the same time, feeling a sharp sense of personal obligation to make them available to everyone.

In mid-January he visited Cambridge and admired its beauties, but he was still under the spell of what he had seen during the Christmas vacation and his letters were full of his feelings.

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Two months later he visited picturesque Chester which he described in great detail. But he also went to see the Black Country. He wrote to his brother Richard

"Well, you may be glad you don't live in such a place. The only redeeming features are the white curtains and flowers in the windows of many of the houses. But Oh! It is a wilderness! On you go, mile after mile, a forest of great chimneys in every direction. Village after village, or rather the whole country one irregular ugly town with its blazing furnaces, great earth mounds, coal heaps, ash heaps, smoke everywhere."

And then a few days later, Edinburgh, "the most beautiful city I have ever seen—I might add—or expect to see." But here again, having viewed the wonders of castle and monument, having meditated on historic and literary associations, he spent Saturday night at the Cowgate, "the worst part of Edinburgh and one of the worst slums to be found anywhere." Ragged little girls dancing on the pavement, a Highland soldier in a fight, policemen trying to disperse the crowd, an open-air prayer-meeting under difficulties, nearly everyone drunk on the streets—including mothers reeling along with their babies—men and women quarrelling and striking each other.

"These people are not villains in one sense, not thieves or murderers, but drink has obtained full mastery over them. Then talk about drunkenness or immorality. Why, it seems almost as if you might as well talk to a pack of cowardly dogs about morality. I know one must overcome this feeling, but the low bestial nature seemed at first so prominent as to make one doubt as to whether there was much humanity left."

This insight into the dark side of the great cities was to be a powerful influence on the direction of James Woodsworth's future life. Until he went to Mansfield House in East London he had no conception of the existence of submerged masses of people. Now he was to set himself resolutely to the task of preventing the spread of the blight in Canada, the blight which, in the ultimate analysis, distorts human beings to the point

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where one can doubt it there is much humanity left. In January, before returning to his second term at Oxford, James wrote to his father

"I think I am gaining an idea of a culture deeper than scholarship, which many of us have utterly ignored. I do not want to accept all I see. I do not despise what we have at home in Canada. I would not exchange Canada for England. But my ideals for Canada are being raised."

His "keenest curiosity" for sightseeing satisfied, James went back to Oxford in January, planning to devote more time to reading and the world of ideas. He reminded his father that he had intended to study Christian Ethics particularly, but complained that he found the greatest difficulty in locating lectures or books on the subject. He was surprised by the lack of systematic literature, and "so till some master-mind gives us a satisfactory system, I shall try to work out my own, for my own satisfaction. Indeed I cannot help it." The books, he found, treated of Greek Ethics, of Jewish Ethics, of Christian Ethics, but "surely there must be only one great system of morality, combining in itself all morality." To this letter his father's reply shows the blend of wisdom and tolerance which always characterized him, as well as a shade of concern lest his son get into difficulty.

"I have read with great interest your reflections on the subject of Ethics. It is indeed a most important one and necessarily involves a most important phase of practical Christian life. You surprise me when you state that the subject has received but small consideration, so far as systematic treatment is concerned at the hands of religious and philosophers. As you know, my opportunities have been few compared with yours, to read either theology or philosophy. I would have supposed that the subject of Ethics would have received as much attention as any subject to which either theology or philosophy is necessarily closely related. I sympathize with your ardent wish to in some way, either by original research or otherwise, satisfy your own mind as to a satisfactory system and one that will

harmonize with Christian teaching. There can be no danger in coming with more light and truth, though possibly there may be danger of adopting wrong methods in the pursuit of truth."

James managed to take in a great variety of lectures and sermons at Oxford. One night he heard a lecture on Christian Socialism from the Rev. Mark Guy Pearce, a lecture which emphasized the tremendous expansion of London during the past fifty years and stressed the great social differences which had come, so that "the worst slums exist within a short distance of the finest residences, the sweat-shops within a few minutes of the splendid West End club rooms." In another letter James tells his mother

"This week had several interesting lectures from outsiders. One by Shaw—a journalist of London—on the effect of socialism on the universities, gave one phase of the industrial changes that are taking place in England."

George Bernard Shaw had still to make his reputation as a playwright, but was at that time an outstanding socialist speaker as well as a drama critic. A sermon that impressed James greatly was given by Dean Farrar in the University Church of St-Mary-the-Virgin

"His denunciations of society and even of the Church were scathing. He called for a prophet who would be willing to denounce the awful evils of the time, who would be prepared to meet the prophet's fate—to be cast out, despised, killed—in the way men are killed by society now."

Though James was tremendously in earnest, it would be a mistake to conclude that he missed the lighter side of life altogether. He got much enjoyment from little humorous things that came his way, writing of them with playful irony to his brothers and sisters. To Mary he wrote

"Did I tell you that here they call overshoes 'snowshoes'? Before I became aware of this I rather startled someone by saying that people in Canada used snowshoes four or five feet long. Just think of the immense overshoes! Think of the feet."

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To Edith he sent an elaborately-illustrated letter with a sketch of his new English suit, "a double-breasted waistcoat and baggy trousers. Quite English, you know. Now I can put my hands in my pockets in the approved style—quite different from the American, don't you know? This style." And he had drawn a suave American front view in ludicrous contrast with a baggy back view of English trousers.

In mid March he wrote his mother "The buds on the trees are beginning to swell or have been for several weeks, but like everything else here they move deliberately and will not be out for weeks yet." A few days later he started on his travels again—the Black Country, the Scottish cities, the Border country, then south to Harwich where he spent a few days with friends, finally a week in Paris before returning to Oxford at the end of April.

Edinburgh and the Scottish people impressed him greatly. With a fellow-Canadian he explored the surrounding country—Leith with its green links, old burying-ground and great docks, Newhaven with its fishwives "in short skirts, low shoes, bright shawl arrangements, and their great creels strapped on to their foreheads." They had an exhilarating ramble among the Braid Hills.

"Beautiful little lochs nestling in the valleys and little burns running down the hillsides. Some of the hills quite rocky or covered with broom and whins. We were looking for heather and also wanted to get higher up. So although it was rather late, set off for the Pentland hills which were five miles farther along. What a climb we had!"

Walter Scott was perhaps James's greatest literary hero at this time. For the next few days he was happy to give himself up to visiting the haunts of the Wizard of the North. In the cathedral crypt in Glasgow it was easy to imagine Rob Roy still hidden in the shadows. Then the Trossachs—Loch Katrine, Ellen's Isle and all the other scenes immortalized in *The Lady of the Lake*. James was entranced, even though "the distances

were not so great as I had expected" and "I could swim myself as far as Malcolm swam." He visited Melrose Abbey in the prescribed fashion, by moonlight, and then Abbotsford. He was forced to by-pass the Lake District owing to lack of time and funds. He also gave up the idea of searching the parish records at Sledmere near York for the history of his father's folk, explaining that "the R.R. fare was nearly \$2," the fees for searching unknown, and permission from the vicar uncertain. James's main purpose in the Paris trip appears to have been a visit to the Great Exposition which was within two months of being officially opened. He was disappointed to find so much of it still incomplete, and spent most of his time visiting the museums, art galleries and other historic spots.

He returned to Oxford for his last brief term. Late in June he would have one more trip, a voyage along the Rhine from Cologne to Heidelberg. He was entranced with the scenery and the legends connected with it. In Heidelberg he witnessed a student duel which appeared to him a somewhat messy and unnecessary affair. While he stood in wonder before the great cathedrals, while he admired the beauty of the countryside and the good manners of the people his inability to speak German cut him off from a full sense of understanding such as he enjoyed in Britain. But even before this last trip his thoughts had begun to turn to Canada once more. For the first time he had written his mother of being homesick. He realized that in order to enjoy the freedom he had had during the year it had been necessary for him to forgo close friendships at Oxford.

"But sometimes there is just a kind of loneliness—wistfulness—as you have to shut yourself up within yourself, be regarded as an outsider. And sometimes in the evening as you pass the windows of many homes [you] feel that in the whole cityful you have none."

For the rest of his life James would know that feeling of loneliness as he moved about from place to place doing his work. He did not repine for he knew it was the price that must be

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paid, but he looked into many lighted windows over the years, longing for the time when he might turn homewards once more to spend a little time with those he loved.

As early as mid-February he had written his father about his next step. He hoped his life-work would be in the Methodist Church in Western Canada, but there was the question of just where he could best fit in. He was convinced that his "gift" was that of teacher rather than preacher or administrator. He concluded that his best niche would be in a college as a lecturer, and he outlined his reasons. First, a personal consideration: he feared lest his nasal trouble which had become chronic would necessitate his remaining in a city within reach of a specialist and where exposure to the elements would be cut to a minimum. Apart from this:

"as in no other phase would one have greater opportunities of influencing the thought and life of men—especially of men who are naturally placed in positions of influence. Then there would be opportunities for directly assisting in city mission work. As our population increases, this will be an increasingly important part of our work—and is to me one of the most interesting. And lastly, although it may seem to you a dream, the long summer vacation might be utilized in extending the influence of the college throughout the country. What a programme!"

In short, he would very much like to become a lecturer in Christian Ethics in Wesley College, Winnipeg. Of course, he knew there were difficulties about such an appointment, the main one being that his father was a member of the Board and that neither of them would wish to make use of this influence. But would there be some way in which the Board could be made acquainted with his desire?

Evidently his father replied, suggesting that James make direct application to the Board. James wrote his father again in May, just before the annual Church Conference was to make appointments for the following year. If there were no hope of a college appointment and he were given a pastorate, James

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asked his father to arrange a supply for him for the six weeks preceding his homecoming. If there should be a suitable opening on the staff of Wesley College, he asked his father to accept it for him, or at least to state that he was so sure that his son would accept that he wanted Conference to leave him without a station.

James's hopes for a career in college work were not to be realized. For the next seven years he would do regular pastoral work, becoming more and more restive as he sought for a better channel through which he could make his new ideas effective.

## CHAPTER IV

### "TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE"

IT was to the little church at Carnevale, Assiniboa, where he had served as a student pastor, that James returned after his dazzling year at Oxford. The steady routine of a country parish—regular Sunday morning service, Sunday School, evening Prayer Meeting, visits to church members—must have seemed a meagre contrast to the rich texture of living which he had just left. It is not surprising that the new minister tried to add content to life at Carnevale. Among other things he established a regular Literary Evening at which the schoolteacher and others gave talks on matters like the British Constitution and topics of more current interest. In a score of other ways he made his influence felt.

But the year at Oxford had made him begin to question the very basis of his religious beliefs and indeed his whole philosophy of life. Quite evidently there was no one at Carnevale with whom he could discuss his mental stirrings. He wrote to his parents about them, finding his father's wisdom and his mother's affection great sources of comfort. But perhaps his closest confidant at this time was his cousin, Charles Sissons,\* to whom we are indebted for preserving these intimate letters. In one we find that Charles, just finishing university, had asked James's opinion about his decision to become a teacher rather than a minister. James wrote him from Carnevale on February 14, 1901, his letter revealing the tenor of his thoughts about service to his fellow-men.

\*Professor C. B. Sissons of Victoria College, Toronto University, who has kindly permitted quotation from his correspondence with J. S. Woodsworth during the years 1901-1907, inclusive.

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" Now about your life work. You ask what I think of your position. Well, from your standpoint I certainly think it is the right one, and I admire you for deciding as you have done. I say 'from your standpoint', for I view the matter somewhat differently to you. The more I think about such matters the more the distinction between sacred and secular diminishes. Theoretically for me, there is no such distinction. It is artificial, false, the product of a narrow ecclesiasticism and a more wretched secularism. Practically the two are so interpenetrating each other that I am gradually attaining my theoretical position in actual life. A man is called to *live!* Life itself is the greatest responsibility and one which no one can escape. 'Called to the ministry', yes, true but no truer than 'called to the bar'. If we have the one spirit the difference of gifts is a minor consideration. It seems to me that if one is in the true relation to God, the question is 'Where and how can I best serve Him?' and this is generally determined by the answer to the question 'For what am I best adapted?'"

James was becoming increasingly sure that he had not yet found his own best place for service. To this same letter he added rather wistfully "Next year I should like to get to Winnipeg for some city mission work, but I shall tell you more of my dreams at some other time."

The dream of mission work in Winnipeg faded for the next year as Conference appointed Rev. James S. Woodsworth to the pastorate at Keewatin, a few hours out from Winnipeg in the heart of the Lake of the Woods vacation-land. Built on lumber and flour-milling, the town itself was a mixture of frontier people during most of the year, with tourists added for the summer season. "This is the greatest town for lonely people," James wrote to his cousin. "Each of us goes his own way, finding no congenial spirits." Of all the lonely people, James was surely the loneliest. Apparently he found no one to whom he could turn for companionship. As there was plenty of time for reading, he set to work on Gibbon's *History of Rome*, and other heavy study. But the parish work was unsatisfactory, people seemed to

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care neither about the state of their souls nor about improving their habits of life, and the young pastor felt horribly isolated. It was at this time that he went through one of his worst periods of mental turmoil. On January 16, 1902, he wrote to Charlie Sissons:

"Do you know I have never been in such trouble as I am at present. Before Xmas things seemed to have reached a climax. But my visit home did me no end of good—brightened things considerably and has made me resolve to be patient and to try to see things from a higher point of view. I have been drifting steadily towards a kind of rationalistic view of religion. Many of the old positions—at any rate, as stated—must go. But where things will end I do not know. I have to hold everything in a merely tentative manner. However, as I have a firm hold on the eternal virtues—on the personal love and guidance of God, I do not feel that I need fear the issue—except in so far as it gives grief or disappointment to my friends.

"But here comes in another question. When I am not sure, and when in any case I cannot hold to the literal meaning of some of our doctrines, am I justified in remaining in an office in which I am supposed to subscribe to them? You see how the difficulties increase?

"Then independently of dogma—for indeed that does not affect materially either my spiritual life or work, I often feel very much disheartened with my work—doubtful as to its efficiency—in fact disgusted with the whole work of the Church."

He went on to explain how a minister lived in a world apart from the people he was supposed to serve, how ordinary men on the street were losing contact with the Church, how so much effort went to keep up congregations, to please cranky people, to keep up the funds—and all for what? Is spiritual work being accomplished?" Evidently his experience had made him pessimistic, for he added:

"Thus indifference—materialism—selfishness is crushing out all spiritual life. Sometimes I feel almost like praying for famine or pestilence or an earthquake to arouse people."

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That was a bleak winter for James. His parents did what they could to cheer him by letter, both of them hoping that he might come once more to find himself sustained by the religious beliefs upon which they had built their lives. His Christmas visit was a great comfort, but after it he sank once more into the dark abyss of his own thoughts. On March 27 he wrote to Charlie

"At present life is to me a terrible tangle. My position sometimes seems almost unbearable. I am again in the woods—deeper than ever—and see no daylight ahead.

"Next Sunday is Easter. Think of doubting the Resurrection and then having to stand in a pulpit! The position is utterly false. It drives me half-crazy at times to think of it. And yet I am not sure of myself. Four months ago I felt thus, and then there came a happy reaction—a victory of faith was it, or a surrender to the old bonds of habit and tradition? May this come again or ought I to rejoice rather in an emergence into a more rational type of Christianity? You may think me weak and vacillating. I am. I don't know what I believe. But I promise to do nothing rash. After another week I shall throw aside my books—go home for a couple of weeks where I can get away from the isolation (moral and spiritual) and depression of this place. Then if I feel equal to it, I shall try it again here for the few weeks that remain till Conference. I think I can do that without acting the hypocrite."

Two weeks later he wrote to his cousin that his mind was made up—unless he got new light between then and Conference in June, he would at that time hand in his resignation as a minister. He didn't know what he would do then. He and his father had been talking matters over and had an idea in mind—the establishment of a non-denominational college at Edmonton along lines which would give wide scope for new religious thinking and practice.

But when Conference came, James received a surprise. He was put on the Stationing Committee which assigns the pastorates for the coming year. This work gave him opportunity for



LUCY STAPLES, '901  
Father, Mrs. J. S. Staples  
*Amherst, Mass. T. 2001*



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long discussions with ministers whose opinions he valued highly. The result was that they convinced him that his ideas were not such as to take him out of the Church, that he should not offer his resignation but should try a year as junior pastor in Grace Church, Winnipeg. He felt, as he said himself, like a man condemned to death who had suddenly been reprieved. He had laid his case before qualified authorities and they had decided that he should continue to live and work within the Church of his forebears.

With renewed vigour he plunged into the many-sided activities of a large city church, infusing into them the wine of new thinking that he had brought with him from the Old Land. There was much more scope for his restless energies than he had found in the two country parishes, and less time for him to review his doctrinal doubts. But he had lived with loneliness too long to forget its misery. He began to dream of having a lifelong companion—a wife who would be a partner in all the things that mattered to him—a home, children, the search for the right path of service to his fellow-men. His thoughts turned back to the splendid companionship during his year at Victoria College, to "the Four" who had been so close and who had grown so much into each other's lives—his cousins Clare Woodworth and Charlie Sassons, himself—and Lucy Staples—"Miss" Staples as she had always been.

Strange that during this first winter at Grace Church he should hear from Miss Staples! It was about a year since she had written. And then another letter in the spring. He began to wish it were possible for them to meet once again and talk over old times. Yes, and new ones, too. Miss Staples had always been interested in ideas—and ideals. She was such a good companion, too, with a fine sense of humour. He had always felt so much at home with her. So it came about that in September, 1903, when he decided to take a brief holiday trip to Ontario, his plans included a visit to Miss Staples, then staying with friends

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at Lindsay. The upshot of the visit was that James Woodsworth and Lucy Staples discovered that they had fallen deeply in love with each other. Neither knew just when the process had started, but both were sure that henceforth they wanted to live and work together. They decided to be married in about a year. Then, filled with new purpose and new happiness, James returned to his work in Grace Church.

They were married the following September, in perfect weather, on the lawn at Lucy's farm home near Cavan, Ontario. September was always her favourite month, when summer lingered with its colour and fruitfulness, gradually crowded out by the crisp nights of autumn with their hints of the full glory of red maple leaves and the coming activity of the winter season. Following a honeymoon at Muskoka, James and Lucy Woodsworth went west to their joint work.

For the time being they would live with James's parents and those brothers and sisters still at home or who kept coming and going on holidays. That their marriage survived this crowded arrangement spoke volumes both for Lucy and for James's mother. The fine understanding which developed between the two women, and indeed between Lucy and all members of her husband's family was even more eloquent evidence of mutual tolerance and affection.

It was a proud moment for James when he introduced his wife to the church members at their first reception. Lucy had the poise, the delightful sense of humour, the maturity, the never-failing intuition—everything necessary to make a complete whole of his work. They had a wonderful winter together, revelling in the delights of partnership, exploring tastes and ideas together. They read poetry aloud. Browning and Lowell, Longfellow and Tennyson. Lucy could never get him to share her keen appreciation of Shakespeare, though, much as she tried. James always remembered selections of verse and bits of prose which he learned at this time. They became a part of his life.

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He would quote them in speeches and writings, they served as chart and compass to keep him on his course.

Their first child was born in July, 1905, a daughter whom they called Winona Grace—a combination from Longfellow's *Huswaha* and the name of the church where they had started their work together. We have a delightful vignette of their life in the parsonage at this time, one which reveals the proud husband and father and which shows his relative mental comfort at this period. To Charlie Sissons he wrote in January 1906:

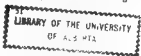
"My study—alas. I spend little time in it these days. Haven't much time except in the short mornings. Then I have been reading Theology (!) to Lucy as she dressed the baby. Lucy is interested in some of these questions that concern our work. But do you know, the domestic atmosphere is having quite an effect on the theology. For instance, even though Grace does cry, it's hard to swallow all that is said in favour of native depravity!"

Lucy always remembered James's persistent morning readings over the howlings of the current baby in the bath. Known as the "Yeller Kid" by some of the younger Woodsworth uncles and aunts, Grace was succeeded by five more babies in due course, all of them provided with excellent lungs. But in spite of this, Lucy refused to get behind in her mental growth, she was grateful that her husband faced such difficulties to keep her abreast of the best ideas he himself could discover.

That January letter from James to his cousin had added a paragraph about James's probable future activities:

"As I said when I wrote, I think likely next year will find us somewhere else than in Winnipeg or its vicinity. Just what we shall do I hardly know yet. Nothing has opened yet but there is plenty of time before June."

Love, marriage, a home, a child—these things had brought peace into his life—for a little while. But now the old doubts were reasserting themselves. He couldn't take some of the church doctrines as literal truth. Therefore it seemed to him dishonest to continue preaching them. Besides, his health was not good.



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at this time and he needed a rest from his heavy pastoral duties. But he knew that he must continue the search for his best field of service until he found it. Lucy agreed with him that he must try to get an opportunity for city mission work. But so far nothing seemed to offer in that line.

In June he asked Conference to leave him without a station for the following year. He had decided to take a long trip, spending part of his time in the British Isles, part of it in Europe, and finally to make a visit to the Holy Land. Lucy would come with him for the British and European part of the trip, returning to Cavan to await his return at Christmas-time. They had a visit at the Staples' farm before they sailed in mid-July. A letter to his mother in Winnipeg tells of an early morning with his baby daughter who was to be left in the care of her aunt.

"Grace sat up to the table for breakfast in her high chair. She had some of the yolk of my egg, and Lucy's, too, and a crust. Then as the bath was not quite ready I took her out for a walk. As we went through the grain to the far barn she had (her feet) washed with dew. Then we came back through the stables. She doesn't like the shiver the horses give when she gets up courage to touch them. The chickens always delight her. The gobbler gobbled at her. She doesn't know what to make of him. And Towzer accompanies us on these expeditions. Her gaze follows him when there is nothing more exciting. So we had quite a bit of exercise."

From such scenes of family happiness James went off on the trip which began as a family excursion, Lucy and several Woodsworths going part way. It ended as a pilgrimage on which he dedicated himself more firmly to the task of living the truth that was in him, regardless of the cost. For it was in the Holy Land, in the Garden of Gethsemane, that he relived the story of the man of Nazareth, seeing before himself the temptations of the world, the material rewards to be gained by following the well-trodden road. He determined, with God's help, to turn his back on these temptations and, in Tennyson's phrase, to follow the gleam, serving humanity in whatever way

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he could, never allowing his conscience to clamour unheard, striving always to live up to the best that was in him.

It was a man restored in health, a man dedicated to following the gleam of an ideal, who returned to Canada at the end of the year. For the next six months he had agreed to go to Revelstoke in the heart of the mountains. The Methodist church there had been badly shaken by a scandal, and James Woodsworth had been chosen to re-establish it. Charles Sissons was teaching school there and the cousins anticipated many hours of companionship in the mountains which both of them loved. Lucy, who was expecting a second child in the late spring, would stay with her family at the farm until James finished his work and decided on his future course.

The letters which James wrote to his wife from Revelstoke were a blend of tenderness and concern for her, for Grace and for the coming child, as well as an eager discussion of his work with the peculiar difficulties to be surmounted. They mirrored his growing conviction that preaching was not his proper work, and his determination to try once more to resign from an office where he was expected to promulgate doctrines in which he had ceased to believe. They were rich with descriptions of the people in the little mountain town—railwaymen, construction crews, a Chinaman going down the street in a loose blouse and pigtail, carrying a long pole on his shoulder with a basket suspended at each end. For all the world as if he had stepped out of a S.S. paper! And then the turbaned Hindus with earrings give a decidedly eastern aspect." They breathed, too, the fragrance of the evergreen scented forests crowned by the overshadowing grandeur of the peaks, they spoke of the beauty of delicate upland flowers, some of which are still pressed between the yellowed pages of writing.

His parents' anxiety for him as he faced the difficult situation in Revelstoke with his own spiritual troubles unresolved, is

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shown in a letter from his mother written a week after he had passed through Winnipeg on the way to the mountains

"I was much drawn out in prayer for you on Sunday. And as we sang and read the words of that beautiful hymn beginning, 'Spirit of faith, come down', etc., I just felt if you could only understand more by this living faith many of your difficulties would be removed. I do hope you may be very happy in your work and realize there are large opportunities to work for the upbuilding of God's kingdom with the redemption of mankind even if you do not see or agree with the methods and teachings that are largely in use. Changes are coming very fast even in our church, whether for the better or worse."

The new minister lost no time in tackling the problem. Within two weeks of his arrival he wrote to Lucy

"I have called on every family generally recognized as Methodist—on some of them twice. The majority are coming back. One or two families may not do so. Things were in pretty bad shape. My! But there is work to do here—everywhere I suppose. Hotels open all the time practically. Gambling everywhere. About thirty girls, I'm told, in houses of ill-fame in the lower town. And no one doing anything about it. I am trying to stiffen the backs of some of these men here and awaken the sense of responsibility and if possible instil some Christian charity and unity in the hearts of our church people."

He goes on to describe a visit to a leading church member, a man generally reported to be hand in glove with the hotel traffic. James had been to his home for tea. "Afterwards I went to his office and had a straight talk with him. He denied straight the rumours and I am bound to accept such a denial until definite proof to the contrary is produced."

Of James Woodsworth's work in Revelstoke, Professor Sissons writes in 1952

"He took up work in the Methodist Church there which had been shattered by a scandal, and within a few weeks had established the whole work. Not only his pastoral work but his pulpit work also

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was greatly appreciated. I was well aware that he was confining his preaching to doctrines which he could honestly accept, but I doubt if any of the other hearers who filled the church were conscious of the fact. Apart from good preaching, he was also familiar with the railway ties, the lumber roads and the mining trails. He literally went out into the byways and hedges and compelled men to come in. Mark you, this was in spite of the doubt and uncertainty [in which he lived]. . . "

In this doubt and uncertainty his letters to Lucy and her replies were a great comfort to him. He worried about her health, fearing lest she might not be telling him of untoward symptoms. But her letters were joyous and reassuring, full of details about Grace and the doings at the farm. He longed for the time when they might be together again. Here is a bit from one letter:

"Sometimes I feel as if this is no kind of life to be living at all. Married, yet separated from home! But the time will pass—forty days already, isn't it, measured by our Psalms! [which they had agreed upon for daily reading]. Then together, we hope—to stay. I am sending you by this mail my notes for a children's service which we had yesterday morning."

That was the splendid thing about Lucy: he could share his thoughts with her and she understood even at a distance of fifteen hundred miles! Not only that, she was as firm as he about the need of living up to the highest principles. There was that sentence in one of her letters: "Nothing takes precedence of the ought." He wrote her about it: "Oh, my dear wife, it isn't one woman in a thousand who could say that—and mean it."

He felt sure that such a woman could fully understand his dilemma. He was doing a good job in the Methodist church at Revelstoke. The congregation included alienated members who had now returned, as well as new ones, among whom was at least one member of the Socialist Party of Canada—a man who interested James but who appeared to him narrow-minded and

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given to "talking the greatest folly because we could not fall in with his ideas." Perhaps the clearest indication of James's success from the viewpoint of his congregation is given by this incident related by his cousin, Charlie Sissons, forty-five years later:

"He had announced that he was leaving the church at mid-summer, but not giving his reason. The fact was that he was preparing to resign from the Conference. One day as I was hurrying to my lunch at noon hour, one of the prominent laymen of the church was standing in front of his warehouse. He said 'Mr Woodsworth is going to leave. What is his reason?' I replied that I knew the reason but was not at liberty to state it. I knew further that during the previous week [he] had taken this particular layman to task for some moral dereliction. 'Well,' said the culprit, 'he must stay. Will you tell him from me that I am prepared to add \$500 a year to my regular subscription if he will remain with us.'"

But that was the rub. James Woodsworth felt that he could no longer remain in any church pulpit, and for two reasons. One concerned his attitude to doctrine and he had carefully embodied it in the resignation which he prepared in April to be ready for Conference in June. In part he said:

"Many of the doctrines of course, I believe, but there are some that rest upon historical evidence which, for me, is not conclusive. Some are founded on psychological conceptions and metaphysical theories quite foreign to modern thought and are, for me, meaningless. Some deal with matters upon which, it seems to me, it is impossible to dogmatize. Some I cannot accept in the form in which they are stated. Some I cannot accept at all. Yet I am required to 'sincerely and fully believe the doctrines of Methodism' and to endeavour fully and faithfully to preach them."

But there was another reason, apart from dogma, why he felt that he must resign. James never seems to have sorted it out as a clear reason by itself, although it appears evident that it played a great part in the compulsion he felt to resign from the

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ministry. He simply didn't want to be a preacher. He wanted to get out of the pulpit and among the people. He wanted to minister to them practically without having to bother with the screen of dogma between him and them. After one glorious mountain outing he wrote to Lucy, quoting John Wesley

"Parties and sects I leave behind  
Enlarged my heart and free my thought  
Where'er the latent truth I find  
The latent truth with joy to own."

Once before when he had been ready to resign, Conference heads had relieved him by rescuing him from the narrow country pulpit and putting him where his yearning for many-sided service would find scope. But even then he was still in the pulpit, tied to dogma and preaching. He felt that somehow he must free himself. The only course he could see was to offer his resignation. There is evidence in his letters that Lucy saw that another alternative existed, that perhaps he could find the type of work he craved within the framework of the Church. James was surprised and a bit disappointed that she should fail to grasp the intensity of his feeling on the matter.

"When I wondered how you could still suggest remaining in the Church, I was thinking that my statement must have been far from convincing. My argument seemed to me to shut out any other course. To-day I re-read my 'Apologu' carefully, in fact I copied it—and Lucy, I think it is all right—that it says what I want to say. As to sending it to the President [of Conference] now, I am not quite sure. I have sent a copy to Father, asking what he thinks will be the wiser course. There is plenty of time before Dist. Meet. and I would like to have Father's advice. I'm so glad you are not worrying. I am not—and I wonder at myself. I think that deep down there is a conviction that the way will open up some way at the right time."

On May 1 he wrote once more to Lucy about his resignation, repeating that he was not worrying about the future, yet revealing that his mind was far from settled. "Sometimes I feel

as if it's a kind of beginning of failure. Then again there comes a confidence." The next day there occurred an event which drove all other considerations from his mind—at least for a while. His second daughter, Belva Elizabeth was born. He and Lucy had had much correspondence about possible names, and he finally urged that she follow her wish to call the baby after her two sisters. For the next few days James knew all the anxieties of waiting for news about Lucy's health and that of the new baby. His letter to Lucy of May 8 was one of great relief mixed with continuing concern.

"I don't believe I can do much this afternoon. Couldn't settle down this morning because a letter didn't come and can't settle down now that it has come. I'll be at the P. O. every morning now for a few days."

Three days later he wrote Lucy that he had given the Church Board in Revelstoke his reason for not being able to consider their invitation to remain.

"The thing felt somewhat as a 'thunderbolt out of a clear sky'. Several had been confident that they could induce me to remain. Charlie spoke very kindly and several others of the Board and they passed a motion expressing appreciation of my work."

"Yes, this step is right. It will be a grief to some. I feel sorry most of all on account of Mother. It will be misunderstood by some. But we must be willing to face such things."

His next letter came from Kelowna where he attended the British Columbia Conference of the Church and felt the strong attraction of lakes and mountains and forest which was to draw him back again and again to the West Coast province in years to come. In proof of his unconscious belief that the Church could still provide his proper field of service, he wrote that he had been making enquiries as to work, but that there appeared no suitable opening as yet. He had spoken freely of his doctrinal doubts to these ministers and found it strange that so many of them were not holding strictly to Methodist dogma,

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that many of them were very tolerant and considered his resignation unnecessary.

At the beginning of June, 1907, Rev J. S. Woodsworth left Revelstoke, loaded with the regrets and good wishes of his congregation. He reached Carman in time for the Manitoba Conference. His resignation was considered by a special committee of leading ministers whose report to the Conference was as follows:

"The findings of your Committee having had a full and frank conversation with Bro. James S. Woodsworth re the cause of his resignation, we find that there is nothing in his doctrinal beliefs and adhesion to our discipline to warrant his separation from the ministry of the Methodist Church and therefore recommend that his resignation be not accepted and that his character be now passed."

The report was moved in Conference there was no discussion, the vote was apparently unanimously in favour of adoption. Writing to Lucy about it James remarked that "perhaps it looks like a tempest in a teapot and yet it seemed right. Certainly the Church is broad and generous and sympathetic whatever its standards are."

In this case the Church was also very wise. Having refused to accept James Woodsworth's resignation, it proceeded to give him the kind of work for which he had served so many years' apprenticeship. Conference put him in charge of All People's Mission then being established in North Winnipeg. At last James was to go where the need was great and where his energy and initiative would be taxed to the utmost. Congratulating him on his appointment, his father said quietly "You have your chance, James." In his generation James Woodsworth, Senior, had been prepared to pioneer the West while most of his contemporaries stuck to the known paths and established ways of eastern Canada. That was perhaps what gave the older man understanding of a son who, in his turn, was eager for the untrodden trail. The pioneer spirit within him bade his son God-speed as he embarked on his new venture.

## STRANGERS WITHIN OUR GATES

DEEPLY implanted in J. S. Woodsworth, as in so many North Americans, was the conviction that life should be perpetual striving. His forebears had had the same urge which drove them across an ocean and deep into a continent. With his contemporaries in the commercial world it showed itself in fierce competition as they strove to build bigger and bigger businesses. With those in the professions there was the constant drive to excel in their chosen field. With some—and J. S. Woodsworth was among these—there was a relentless compulsion to seek inner growth, to develop toward perfection, even though they knew it to be unattainable in this life.

My father's whole background and home training had dedicated him to this search. His student days at Oxford had quickened the ferment of unrest. The years following had been a time of incessant mental strife, of questioning, when he discarded many of the doctrines dear to his parents and began painfully to hammer out his own lines of thought. Gradually he outgrew the belief that personal salvation was the quest to which he should devote his life. With him, to outgrow an idea was to outgrow at the same time the mode of living based on that idea. He had the courage, always, to leave the old, familiar environment for the new, untried adventure.

When we were small children at the Mission, we were looking at "The Bottom Drawer" one day. Someone picked out a curly seashell and held it up to the light. Father had us listen to the faint echo of the sea through its spiral chambers. Then he recited

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"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!"

We weren't very old, but with the shell before our eyes we were able to grasp something of the meaning of "The Chambered Nautilus." It would be years, however, before we realized how perfectly it described Father's own life.

He came to the Mission because he had outgrown the concept of the individual seeking salvation through perfecting his daily personal habits. Christianity for him had come to mean giving service to those fellow-humans who needed it most. He found them in the uprooted immigrants pouring into the North End of Winnipeg.

Most people would have settled down to the administrative work of the Mission, content to ease the difficulties of the immigrants as they fitted into existing conditions. But not J S Woods-worth. The flame of his inner strife was fanned by his new experiences. While he ran the work smoothly, continuously expanding it to take care of new needs, his mental and emotional life was already outrunning the possibilities of the Mission. During his six years there he did an almost unbelievable amount of work of a variety bewildering to those who look back on it now. But more; those years, and particularly the last three, were a period of intense spiritual development, a period in which he finally forged the new concepts on which he was to build his living. He was to develop and modify them as he went along, but by the time he left the Mission in his thirty-ninth year, the foundation ideas for the rest of his life's work were to hand.

He left the Mission for the same reason that he came to it: he had outgrown one way of living and was ready for a new

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one. He had come at last to the conclusion that social service, left to the initiative of scattered individuals and organizations, was no longer good enough. He envisioned a single clearing-house, at the same time initiator and stimulus, which could work with every individual and agency in the field to do a planned job of social service so thorough that no one would be neglected and that no need would remain unmet. That was the dream that resulted in the Canadian Welfare League.

Between his coming to the Mission and his leaving it were six of the most vital and decisive years in J. S. Woodsworth's life, years which must be understood if one is to understand what came after. Part of the record is in three bulging scrapbooks in the keeping of Woodsworth House at Ottawa.\* Part of it is in letters and memoranda, many of them scattered beyond recall. The rest is in the lives of thousands of Canadians from coast to coast, people in many walks of life, whose lives touched his during those crowded years.

The first scrapbook, "A Book of Beginnings", opens with the arrival at the Mission in 1907 and covers the first three years there. I have already described something of that period seen through the eyes and remembered by the mind of a child. But J. S. Woodsworth saw much more. The yellowed clippings describe in text and picture the rich variety among the immigrants—in national origin, religious belief, group customs. My father delighted in so much colour and in the challenge to weave the rich strands into the life of the Mission. For church and other papers he wrote vivid accounts of the melting-pot that was North Winnipeg.

But it wasn't long before Mission workers began reporting dreadful living conditions in many of the homes they visited. In January, 1908, J. S. Woodsworth wrote an article based on these reports and entitled "The Homes in Our Parish". Here are a few of those described.

\* Now in the National Archives.

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"Jacob Lahucki is employed in the C.P.R. shops. He is a Ruthenian, his wife Polish. They are both Roman Catholics, but occasionally attend our Mission. They have two young children. They live in one room and have nine boarders, and the wife goes out washing."

"Michael Yakoſſ and his wife are Russians. They have four children. He has only one leg and acts as caretaker in a hall for which he receives \$12 a month. They live in three rented rooms for which they pay \$8 a month. They keep some roomers. Pieter, the eldest boy, eight years old, has to go out along the streets and lanes where he can find sticks of wood, empty bottles, etc., for which he gets a few cents to help keep the family. Of course he does not go to school. The family is Orthodox Greek, but attend the Mission."

"Pieter Daghook and his wife are Ruthenian. He is a labourer - works 'steady', but drinks heavily. They have eight children. The eldest daughter is married and doing well. One boy ran away from home. Another boy is in jail. A thirteen-year-old girl is at present in the hospital, and the four younger children are still at home."

"John Luefbachy's and his wife Mary came out from Galicia last spring. When he reached Winnipeg, it was discovered that he had 'sore eyes' and he was deported. His wife remained in the Immigration Hall for several months. Then she had a bad ankle, and had to be taken to the hospital. The three children were sent to the Children's Aid."

"John Kenbyel and his wife and six children and from fifteen to twenty boarders live in four rented rooms. The place is - 'beastly dirty'. The boarders bring home kegs of beer nearly every day. Two of the older girls are working out. One of them told our visitor the other day that she cannot stay at home, she is happier away."

Rev J. S. Woodsworth had seen these and similar homes and was appalled. He set himself to bring the facts to the attention of the public, confident that the response would be a demand for action. He warned civic leaders of the growing menace of such homes, not only to the North End but to the whole of Winnipeg. However, nothing was done and it took a serious

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city-wide outbreak of "summer complaint" to start a clean-up campaign. Many babies died during those hot days of July and August. Most of them were the children of the immigrants, but some came of well-established families. My brother Ralph, then in his second summer, was so gravely ill that his recovery seemed a miracle. My father must have thought of that other baby whose funeral service he had conducted a little earlier and of whom he had written to the *Free Press*:

"Yesterday I stood beside a child's grave. Away on each side of me stretched long rows of tiny graves. Several workmen were hard at work digging new graves that to-morrow and the next day will be filled. The fearful expense and waste of all these lives, the trouble and heart-breaking grief of their parents could be, much of it prevented. That is the plain, unvarnished fact."

To conduct such funeral services while using the prescribed words "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away", appeared to J. S. Woodsworth blasphemy of the worst kind, an attempt to fasten on the Lord the responsibility for the criminal negligence of the citizens of Winnipeg. He had no intention of taking refuge in such moral dishonesty.

He tried to do what he could to get the church people of South Winnipeg to help alleviate North End conditions. I've often heard him tell of his attempt to interest one good church woman. She was a very conscientious wife and mother; her house was spotless and her two little girls looked as though they had stepped from a bandbox. But her duty, as she saw it, stopped at her front and back gates. My father tried to get her to come to the Mission and help the immigrant women learn Canadian ways of housekeeping. But no, she said she was doing her duty by her family. Let those other women do the same. When the summer complaint epidemic came, both her little girls sickened and died. Father ended this story by saying "And that was the hard way this woman learned the lesson that none of us can live unto ourselves."

Poor home conditions led to his discovery of the unsatisfac-

### *Strangers Within Our Gates*

tory state of schooling in the province of Manitoba, and the urgent need for a compulsory education law. At that time the separate school issue was a thorny one in the province, and neither of the political parties wanted to run the risk of having to grapple with it. The Superintendent of All People's Mission found that nearly one-third of Manitoba's children did not attend school of any kind, public or private. He raised his voice and used his pen with growing insistence for a compulsory school law in the province. His own work in this connection and his influence on others created not a little of the pressure that eventually secured the legislation.

Another demand arising from his work was for the establishment of a Juvenile Court in Winnipeg. He felt that such a court could do much more to help young people who fell into wrong conduct than the ordinary Police Court which was then the only existing tribunal. He urged support of the Juvenile Delinquents Bill, then under discussion at Ottawa. It gave him real satisfaction when in 1908 Winnipeg became the first city in Canada to set up a Juvenile Court under the new federal legislation.

But, important as it was to have remedial measures, he always believed that an ounce of prevention was worth many pounds of cure. "Better a fence round the edge of the cliff than an ambulance down the valley," he was to write a year or so later. He urged the need of playgrounds for the city's children, particularly those in under-privileged districts—places where they could have safe and wholesome recreation. He had to wait a few years for results, but in 1912 Winnipeg's civic administration took over the playgrounds of the city and proceeded to plan their proper distribution and servicing—again a pioneer among cities.

April, 1909, saw the publication of J. S. Woodsworth's book, *Strangers Within Our Gates*. He had put it together in such moments as he could spare from other work. To a great extent it was a mosaic of quotations. Its author had no aspirations to

be a literary figure. He wanted to rouse the conscience of Canadians everywhere to the need for understanding the immigrant and helping him become a good citizen. So the book was a mixture of striking statistics, illustrations, telling quotations, reports from Mission workers, and opinions of social service authorities at home and abroad.

Older-established Canadians tended to look down on the immigrants as dirty people with low morals, a constant danger to Canadian standards: not that they intended to do anything about it except to rely on the policy of out-of-sight-out-of-mind. J S Woodsworth always believed the way to handle any problem was to deal with it immediately and decisively on the basis of fact. He recognized the serious problem of fitting all these people into Canadian life. But he saw that what they needed was friendship and help in learning the ways of the new land. He took his Christianity seriously. Here were no "lesser breeds without the law." Here were his brothers and sisters, many of whom like the stranger who travelled the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, had fallen among thieves—steamship, railway, land settlement interests—and who had been stripped of their small possessions and left by the wayside. They needed Good Samaritans desperately, but too few Canadians seemed willing to come to their rescue. *Strangers Within Our Gates* was a plea for help.

Immigration had its dangers and its opportunities. My father felt that leadership of the right kind could overcome the dangers and widen the opportunities. He turned to the place where he felt that leadership should be—his Church. The book's final chapter, "A Challenge to the Church", is a ringing call for service, a strong appeal to the Church to lead in this task of building citizenship. J S. Woodsworth had faith that the Church would respond, but he concluded his challenge with a warning that "the effort must be not merely to preach to the people, but to educate them and to improve the entire social conditions."

## *Strangers Within Our Gates*

Some time during 1909 there occurred an event which appeared of small significance at the time, but which was to have far-reaching results. The Ministerial Association appointed Rev J. S. Woodsworth as its delegate to the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council. In view of his eagerness for the Church to give leadership in community problems, it is easy to guess that he himself urged this course upon the Ministerial Association, and that the Association, having decided to send a delegate, proceeded to choose the most suitable and willing one available. And there is no doubt that he kept the Ministerial Association faithfully informed of the viewpoint of organized labour as he learned it himself. This experience gave him a wholly new insight into the problems of the wage worker, whom he discovered had a very different slant on life from his own and that of the salaried professional people who had been almost his only associates up to that time.

In the spring of 1909 there appeared in a little Winnipeg Labour paper, *The Voice*, the first of a series of articles headed "The Week-Day Sermon by Pastor Newbottle". Running through them was the new wine of criticism which the living conditions of the immigrants and the working conditions of those in industry were forcing upon the Rev. J. S. Woodsworth who wrote the series. The week-day sermon of May 14 begins with this ironical verse by Arthur Hugh Clough:

"Thou shalt not kill, but need'st not strive  
Officiously to keep alive.  
Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat  
When it's so lucrative to cheat.  
Thou shalt not covet; but tradition  
Approves all forms of competition."

Pastor Newbottle's sermon deals with the evasion of the Ten Commandments, upon which evasion he was finding so much of society based.

"It isn't popular to have the Ten Commandments written on our church walls now. They're whitewashing them all over. Some

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

day a great reformer will come along and clean off the whitewash. He'll point to the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' The great railroad manager who ordered poor rails and the man at the switch will stand convicted of murder as much as the poor wretch who swings from the gallows. The man who steals his employer's—or his employee's—time, is more a thief than the one who steals his purse. The unearned increment, underpaid labour, scamped work, as long as these and a hundred other forms of theft exist, the world cries for preachers of righteousness.

"But a better day is coming. The light is being turned on. Quackery and Greed and Hypocrisy of all kinds are being exposed. Some foolish people think that the light is making the dirt—just as the child thinks of the moles in the sunshine. Not a bit of it. The light is showing up the dirt. Someone will buy a new broom and sweep it out!"

Rev. J. S. Woodsworth still cherished hopes that the Church would wield the broom. But Pastor Newbottle was beginning to have grave doubts. The week-day sermon of June 25 expressed them.

"Has the Church failed? A few churches are making a desperate effort to keep a grip on schools and hospitals and social organizations. They think their very existence depends on this. Perhaps it does. Their existence as corporate, property-holding, office-perpetuating institutions. But churches don't exist to maintain their own existence. They don't exist to hold property. They don't exist to perpetuate certain offices or positions. They exist to help make this world better."

Pastor Newbottle was relentlessly pushing Rev. J. S. Woodsworth to apply his Christian principles to the modern industrial world into which he was gaining such close vision. If the Church would not give the necessary practical leadership, he would have to work through some other agency.

In the fall of 1910 the "People's Forum" was started in the old Grand Theatre. It proved such a successful experiment in community co-operation and enjoyment that it was carried on

## *Strangers Within Our Gates*

regularly twice every Sunday of the "Forum" season for seven years. It was J. S. Woodsworth's idea, growing from his eagerness to integrate the new Canadians with the rest of the community, but it made such a widespread appeal and drew in so many helpers from the entire city, that before long it had become one of Winnipeg's prized cultural achievements.

The Sunday afternoon programme was a lecture, often illustrated, always followed by discussion. In the evenings there were concerts put on by the various national groups. What pride they had in bringing the culture of their homeland before the appreciative audiences of their new fellow-citizens! They, the recently-despised immigrants, gained a new sense of dignity and worth, a sense of belonging because they were able to contribute. What feasts for the eye and ear were enjoyed by the longer-established Winnipeggers, many of whom came from puritanical backgrounds which had mistrusted colour and emotion for many generations!

My father made his contribution to the "People's Forum" both as a Board member and a Sunday lecturer. A brief excerpt from the report of his lecture on "My Religion", given during the 1913 season, shows the direction of his thinking on this subject during the preceding few years.

"He serves God best who serves his fellow-men." One of two of the characteristics of the final religion were: Individual freedom would have to give place to social service; religion would be democratic in its organization, and it would involve changed ethical standards. For example, the test of honesty would not be 'Have I wronged some particular person?' but 'Have I rendered adequate service to the community?'"

J. S. Woodsworth was growing and groping toward some form of positive religion in which the "shalt nots" would be replaced by "shalts", in which "Love and let live" would be transformed into "Love and help live".

For seven fruitful years the "People's Forum" made its contribution to Winnipeg life. War came in 1914 and with it,

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

bitterness. Those who had been in process of becoming brothers now became aliens once more, and there was strife among the various national groups. At the end of the 1916-1917 season the "Forum" closed its doors for the last time. To show the range of interests it had included and the quality of the lecturers it had provided, I include its afternoon programme for that final season. The name of J S Woodsworth is nowhere in evidence, perhaps the best proof that he had succeeded in enlisting the talent of the community to the point where he himself was free to pioneer in other fields. On this last programme folder appears one of his favourite quotations. It is from Eugene V. Debs, the American socialist who went to prison for his beliefs

"While there is a lower class, I am in it. While there is a criminal element, I am of it. While there is a soul in jail, I am not free."

The programme was as follows

CANADA AND THE EMPIRE	Rev. Dr S. G. Bland.
THE BIRDS OF MANITOBA	Prof. V W Jackson
THE CHALLENGE OF THE FRANCHISE	Mrs. Alice A. Holling Mrs. Winona E. Dixon.
HANDS!	R. Watkin Mills.
THE PRESENT SOCIAL FERMENT IN WESTERN CANADA	H. W. Wood, President, United Farmers of Alberta
LEADING SPEAKER FROM SOCIAL WELFARE CONGRESS TO BE HELD AT THIS TIME IN WINNIPEG*	
OUR SECRET FOES AND HOW TO FIGHT THEM	Dr. William Boyd, Professor of Pathology, Man. University
THE WAR AND THE PROBLEM OF TAXATION	
SINGLE TAX	F. J. Dixon, M.P.P.
THE FARMERS' VIEWPOINT	R. C. Henders, President, Manitoba Grain Growers' Association.

\* There is no record of who was finally chosen.

## *Strangers Within Our Gates*

FOUNDATION STONES OF PERMANENT PEACE	
INDUSTRIAL JUSTICE	T. J. Murray, solicitor for the Trades and Labor Council.
DAYLIGHT DIPLOMACY	Hugh Mackenzie.
IS THERE A MORAL EQUIVALENT FOR WAR?	Miss Ethel Johns, Superintendent, Children's Hospital.
WORLD ORGANIZATION	
A UNIVERSAL RELIGION	Miss Sara Romanovska.
OPEN PORTS AND OPEN MARKETS	Horace Chevrier.
THE PARLIAMENT OF MAN	Prof. W. F. Osborne.
CANADA'S FINANCIAL SYSTEM FROM THE FARMER'S VIEWPOINT	T. A. Cotrâr, President, Grain Growers' Grain Co.
THE GIRL WAGE EARNER	Miss Cecelia Calder, Children's Aid Society.
	Miss Ida Badlaugh, Provincial Factory Inspector.
A FRENCH REVIVAL	Charles E. Muller, Lecturer in French, Manitoba University.
PUBLIC HEALTH IN WINNIPEG	Dr. A. J. Douglas, City Health Officer.
NATIONALITY IN CANADA AND THE EMPIRE	Chester Martin, Professor of History, Man. University.
THE UKRAINE	J. S. Arsenyeh.
	Ivan Petruschewich.
THE RAILWAY SITUATION IN CANADA	John W. Dufoe, Editor, Manitoba Free Press.
LAWS RELATING TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN	Miss Isabel R. MacLean.
PROFESSIONS AND CAREERS FOR WOMEN	Mrs. D. J. Grant.
TOLSTOI	Rev. Dr. Horace Westwood, All Saints Unitarian Church.
ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECES OF THE WORLD	A. A. Stoughton, Professor of Architecture, Man. University.

*J. S. Woodsworth*

**NEXT STEPS IN SOCIAL PROGRESS**

**A SOCIALIST'S VIEWPOINT**

W. H. Hoop.

**A SOCIAL WORKER'S VIEWPOINT**

J. H. T. Falk, Secretary, Social  
Welfare Association.

**A LABOR VIEWPOINT**

A. Percy Chew

## CHAPTER VI

### MY NEIGHBOUR

J. S. WOODSWORTH'S second book, which appeared in July 1911, was clear evidence that he had entered upon a new phase in his thinking. *Strangers Within Our Gates* had been the plea of a pastor for help with his parishioners. *My Neighbor* was the appeal of an experienced social service worker for city wide "organized helpfulness." It embodied his realization that the modern city—the inevitable fruit of industrialism—has terrible potentialities for destroying human worth. *My Neighbor* is a call to responsible citizens to unite in creating constructive social forces in the community strong enough to overpower the evil forces of ignorance and greed.

The book stresses interdependence as the key fact of the modern city.

"In a rural district each family lives its own life in a large degree independently of the rest of the world. But in the city, before you can get breakfast, you must have secured the services of the milkman, the baker, the butcher, and a score of other tradesmen who, in carrying on their business, are directly dependent upon the commission agents and wholesale dealers, upon express companies and transportation systems. These in turn reach out arms in every direction and touch the whole commercial life of the country. Let the street cars stop, for instance, or the electric power fail, and the whole business of the city is immediately 'hed up.' City life is like a spider's web—pull one thread and you pull every thread . . . It is an immense and highly-developed organism in which each minutest part has a distinct function."

Man has become a communal being. Gradually this fact is making its impact upon us. "By slow degrees we are learning

that 'the welfare of one is the concern of all' In the city, for good or ill, we are members one of another."

To-day when the world has reached the second half of the twentieth century, the truth of the "oneness" of human beings is on the verge of general acceptance. Forty years ago J S Woodsworth, living in a world which thought of individuals as so many unconnected beings, was one of the pioneers in the astounding discovery of the literal truth that in modern society no one can live alone.

Having recognized this truth, his next step is to see that city living is planned in line with it. This means putting into practice the principles of modern community planning on which the author includes a thorough chapter. In the process, selfish sectional interests must be subordinated to the interests of the whole community.

"Surely in our laws, 'vested interests' and 'property rights' must give way before the rights of men and the welfare of society. The railroads owe their traffic and their profits to the city, and their selfish interests ought to be entirely subordinated to the public welfare."

For J S. Woodsworth the plain duty of a citizen is to work actively for those changes and this changed outlook. The reward will be the creation of a better type of human being than has been possible heretofore. To-day community action is necessary for the preservation of the individual and his improvement.

"These changed ideals of living will be reflected in our customs and also inevitably react upon our characters. The highly-developed 'social' man will be psychologically, ethically and spiritually far in advance of his ancestors who had learned only to live to themselves."

Because such thinking is familiar at mid-century to all progressively-minded people, it is necessary to remind ourselves that these words were written in 1911, when social psychology was something pretty well confined to the laboratory—and mostly the laboratories of Europe. The Superintendent of All People's

## *My Neighbour*

Mission had not read about it in books, he had discovered his facts in the laboratory of North Winnipeg.

"But if the citizen fails to act?" he asks. Then there will be inevitable penalties such as society is paying in England. And he takes his readers back with him in memory.

"The writer remembers clearly his first contact with social conditions in the cities of the Old Land some eleven years ago. Beautiful squares, historic palaces, old cathedrals, wonderful art galleries, the unaffected dignity, the unbreed sense of honour, the ripe scholarship, the age-long culture—all these cast a potent spell, but even these could not blind him to the monotony and wretchedness of the lives of great masses of the people. The Bowers of civilization were beautiful, but what of the millions of toilers submerged in the muck? They were struggling for an existence, at best degraded and miserable.

"After all, it was good to get back to Canada. Many things might be primitive and undeveloped, but in contrast with the dwellers of the slums our poorest people seemed so clean and honest and independent. Above all, there was a general friendliness and helpfulness that warmed one's heart.

"A decade has passed, but what changes. The whole social atmosphere is different. We can now read and hear sentiments like this. 'The wage of the average worker on the whole has, during the past year, been enough to keep him and no more. His economic position is in no way improved. As a matter of fact it is probably worse since at no time of which we know has the working class received a smaller proportion of the goods it produced than right now. Moreover, the outlook is none too bright. If our prognostications be correct, the wheels of industry will run but slowly this winter, so that even the doubtful privilege of producing wealth for others will be denied many of them, and then where will they be?'"

J. S. Woodsworth had read these last sentiments in the *Western Clarion*, a socialist paper. They led to a discussion in his book about trade unions. He based his opinions on his own practical knowledge of how workers and their families live, on

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

his experience as a delegate to the Trades and Labor Council, and on wide reading. He writes

"Unionism has already accomplished much. Factory acts, the reduction in the hours of labour, and the establishment of a standard rate of wages have been brought about largely through pressure on the part of the unions . . .

"The unions have made mistakes, of course. Even leaders cannot see clearly and act dispassionately when they are hewing a way through an unknown jungle with the enemy harassing them at every forward movement. Then the leaders must carry the rank and file with them, and unionism is the most democratic of all movements: this is its present weakness and its ultimate strength. In the final adjustment of the conflicting factors of the industrial situation and the social reconstruction that must inevitably take place, trade unionism will undoubtedly have a leading place."

Again

"The employer takes the position. 'This is my business and I intend to run it. I will submit to no dictation as to wages, hours or conditions of work . . .

"The workers on their part claim: and the justice of their claim is being more clearly recognized—that they ought to have a voice in deciding the conditions under which they work."

It is difficult to realize that these things were written over forty years ago. In many circles to-day they are still dangerously radical ideas, and their acceptance in practice is still nowhere too solid. Yet forty years ago J. S. Woodsworth, a pastor brought up in an environment to which unions were completely strange, took these ideas as self-evident truths. In *My Neighbor* he declared his sympathies unmistakably. Already he had ranged himself on the side of the "have-nots", on the side of social change. But he did not claim to be a socialist. Indeed, it is doubtful if he knew just where his penetrating logic and his courageous acceptance of his findings were taking him.

*My Neighbor* discusses the possible means for transforming the modern city into the community of his dreams. It considers

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co-operatives, public ownership, public control through taxation, "trust-busting" legislation, socialism, the spiritual regeneration of man. About all these things the author is tentative.

"As Shailer Matthews has pointed out, 'the age does not see its way clearly'. But we may see in what quarter the light is breaking and push forward in that direction even though we have many a stumble and fall. We ourselves confess to a certain eclecticism. Each of these proposed solutions contains a measure of truth. Perhaps the final result will show that none of them is adequate and that the line of development will be the resultant of many social forces, some of which are still largely latent."

That there is nothing tentative in his attitude to right and wrong as he sees them is evident from the following:

"We believe in opportunism and compromise in securing practical reforms, but never when they involve an abandonment of the hope of attaining the ultimate goal or the sacrifice of vital principles."

But there is an urgency about his actual experience that will not allow him to rest on the comfortable sidelines of the theorist waiting for history to unfold. He has seen too much of the evil of modern industrialism, the undermining of the home, the destruction of human values, the haunting scenes of human suffering. His conscience will not let him rest. Something must be done now. Someone is responsible. But again, the old question—*who can be counted on for leadership?* The Church? After years of hoping in that quarter, J. S. Woodsworth has come to the reluctant conclusion that leadership must be sought elsewhere.

"The fact nevertheless remains that many religious leaders are convinced that the Church, as an organization, does not exercise the predominating influence in the lives of its members that once it did, and that it is not to-day coping successfully with the great social problems which, in their acutest form, are found in the city."

Yet even now he is unwilling to abandon all hope for Church leadership. He ends his book on a question mark.

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

"This surely is the mission of the Church, and yet the Church itself is hardly awake to the situation, much less fitted to meet it. Will the Church retain—perhaps we should rather say, regain—her social leadership?"

Meanwhile leadership is urgent. Where can it be found? At this point J. S. Woodsworth turns to the existing social service agencies, headed by the Associated Charities. He envisions a stronger organization, a great reservoir into which the energies of every responsible citizen will be constantly poured, so that from it may flow a steady stream of life-giving help that will revitalize every section of the community and every one of its members, no matter how much beaten down by circumstances.

"Dreams?" he asks in his preface, and hears the inner answer "Yes, but dreams sometimes come true, and visions are prophetic."

The Ministerial Association started far-reaching developments when it sent Rev. J. S. Woodsworth as its delegate to the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council. With new eyes he saw the position of workers in industry and began to work for its improvement. The Trades and Labor Council chose him as one of its delegates to serve on the Commission set up by the Manitoba Government to study and report on technical education. In the spring of 1911 the Commission visited several large eastern cities in the United States to investigate their educational methods.

As may readily be imagined, my father's trip included more than the technical schools of Chicago, Boston, New York and the rest. Several letters carefully preserved by my mother show that he crowded in visits to Hull House in Chicago, to various other settlement projects, to every type of social service institution he could reach in the limited time. His letters show the strain of the trip as well as the clash of old and new ideas within him, strain heightened by the insensitive nature of some of his travelling companions. From Boston he wrote to Mother

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"Well, to-night I'm strung up a bit or unstrung or something. The trouble is that I'm tied up to a party, I guess . . . Last night at dinner on the diner I was nearly desperate. X and I were alone at our end of the car—that is, separated from our party, but the car was crowded. Well, he committed every breach of manners, table and otherwise, that I ever heard of. Then started to inveigh against the capitalist class in his usual loud voice which, of course, could be heard half over the car. Bah!

"Then to-night arrangements were such that he and I went to the theatre together. Well, the play I consider a powerful one—*The Fourth Estate*. It gripped me tremendously, I suppose partly because I don't often see a play, partly because of the social appeal, partly because the motif (is that right?) was 'Be true to the truth at all costs.' You know how, after an oratorio, we have not wanted to talk—just understand . . . Well, that fool of an X—may I be pardoned would insist on lecturing me incessantly on socialism, 'The Appeal to Reason', Eugene Debs, how he had exposed corruption like the man in the play. I protested, asked him not to discuss matters. Then he argued. Well, at last we got to the hotel. Then I started off out again to try to cool off. This second—rather, this few minutes with you, has relieved me."

In very different mood is the little letter to my eldest brother Charles, then nearly three years old

"To-day on the sidewalk I saw some toys. One was a tin man that turned summersaults—Mother will show you how—and a Japanese lady in a carriage with a parasol that ran in a circle, and I saw really alligators and turtles and snapping turtles. Wouldn't you like to come sometime and see them all?"

Your 'father dear' "

And one relaxed Sunday morning letter to Mother "and Grace and Belva and Charles and Ralph" tells how in Boston

"I went off by myself. Down the narrow, crooked streets, hunting up some of the old landmarks. Then down to the markets. I hadn't imagined this kind of thing existed on this side of the ocean. So much like some of the Old Land markets and the people so different from the American type. On the wharfs the usual crowds intent

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on watching the slow-moving steamers. Really the sea develops its own types . . .

"I have some sea shells for the children and we found some starfish. They would be too 'smelly' to bring unless dried, for which we have hardly the facilities, and kelp and dulse, and crab claws, and bugh on the beach a deceased turtle. But the long reaches of smooth, firm sand. The waves breaking gently on the beach, the islands—and stretching away into the mysterious distance, the sea. I wish you could have been there!"

It is not surprising to find J. S. Woodsworth appointed chairman of a special sub-committee to enquire into the educational needs of boys and girls employed as messengers or in shops and factories. Its report, made in the spring of 1912, concludes with the blunt statement that "in nearly all cases the workers have very little education . . . practically no opportunity for advancement", and that in many jobs "some form of healthful and instructive recreation should be provided to break the uninteresting day's work" which is "monotonous and deadening".

Again and again over these years my father returned to the theme of better educational facilities for young people. Addressing the Local Council of Women a few weeks earlier he had said

"One-third of all the children in Manitoba do not attend school, only 25% pass through the entrance, 5% pass through the high school, and 1% go through college. All the rest are practically unprovided for as far as education is concerned. There are few free lectures, concerts, and reading rooms. The only public amusements in North Winnipeg are the saloon, the pool-room, theatre and dance hall. The public schools should be put to larger use. They should be open all the time for education, moving pictures and social amusement for the masses."

But it would be a quarter of a century before educational pioneers in various parts of Canada would discover the imperative need for "the lighted schoolhouse".

## *My Neighbour*

In the *Manitoba Free Press* of October 23, 1911 the following news item appeared

"Severe comment was passed by the members of the Ministerial Association in reference to the conditions prevailing at the Great West Saddlery in the city. The question was placed before the regular meeting of the Association held in the Y.M.C.A. this morning, by Rev. J. S. Woodsworth, who is one of the Association's delegates on the Trades and Labor Council."

The story went on to report that representatives were present of the men who had been dismissed by the company and of those who had gone out on strike in sympathy. The men had been fired because they refused to sign the company's conditions. One of these was the withholding of the first week's wages as caution money. Rev. J. S. Woodsworth had called this "nothing short of an outrage." The real issue, however, was that the men had refused to sign the company's condition that they must have nothing to do with a union.

The upshot of the meeting was a three-minister committee, of whom Rev. J. S. Woodsworth was one, to interview the president of the Great West Saddlery Company and report to the Ministerial Association. The *Winnipeg Saturday Post* of November 4, in a column signed "COZ", tells what happened to these "ministerial moddlers"

"That super-serviceable body, the Ministerial Association, has been rushing in again upon a matter which was none of its business, and has again made itself ridiculous in the eyes of sensible persons . . .

"Unfortunately for the fulfilment of its promises (to the dismissed workers) the Ministerial Association had figured without its host—no less a person than President E. F. Hutchings of the Great West Saddlery Company. Mr. Hutchings has no use for labour unions. He has built up and conducted a large business successfully without union labour, and is quite outspoken in his intention to keep on in the same old way. When a committee from the Ministerial Association waited upon Mr. Hutchings to ask what he was going to do

about the ten long straw workers, they were told that it was none of their business, but that if they really wished to know, he did not propose to do anything, except manage his own business without help from labour agitators or the Ministerial Association .

"It will be news to the average citizen that the Ministerial Association is a body for the arbitration of labour troubles or that its members have a license to condemn a reputable business firm unheard, and to spread about damaging reports on the statement of half a dozen ex-employers with a grouch. If this really is the function of the Ministerial Association, it is quite time that the people of Winnipeg knew the fact. It is a good thing too for the business men of Winnipeg to know that the Ministerial Association considers itself in the light of an active partner in all concerns that hurt help who may become dissatisfied and appeal to the Association for assistance to whip their employers into line."

With consummate strategy the company president followed the interview by an invitation to the vulnerable member of the ministerial committee to visit his factory. This had very happy results from the viewpoint of the company. This committee member did not appear at the next meeting of the Ministerial Association, but reported by letter that he had been received by the Great West Saddlery with every courtesy and that he had found clean, sanitary conditions of work.

"At the risk of being misunderstood," he continued, " Mr Hutchings has evidently planned a closed shop in the interests of organized capital. Aside from the justice or injustice of the agreement prepared and insisted upon by Mr Hutchings, there is in this case no element of tragedy, cruelty or inhumanity.

"I am a friend of labour and believe in the right of labour to organize, but I do not believe that the Ministerial Association in its organized capacity should allow itself to be used as a court of appeal in labour disputes or in the settlement of civic problems . The value of the voice of the Ministerial Association in public affairs, is in exact ratio to the infrequency with which that voice is heard."

In spite of this opinion, a strongly-worded motion of condem-

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nation was put forward by Dr. Salem Bland, seconded by Dr. C. W. Gordon (Ralph Connor), and passed with only one dissenting vote. The heart of it is found in this paragraph:

" . . . The demand of the Great West Saddlery Company, which, if generally enforced, would wipe out all labour organizations, traverses the sacred right of personal liberty, ignores the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, stands squarely across the advancing march of modern economic science, opposes the opinions of the most progressive employers of labour the world over, and outrages every instinct of British fair play."

Following which the motion urged the president of the Great West Saddlery Company to eliminate from his conditions of work the ban on labour unions. There is no record that he ever did so.

In the summer of 1913 J. S. Woodsworth became involved for the first time in practical politics. The incident was short, sharp, and unpleasant. It showed my father's uncompromising attitude where he believed principle to be concerned. Prior to that time his interest in politics seems to have been entirely that of an observer. For example, back in 1907 he had written to Mother:

"Have you been following the Manitoba elections? Prof. Osborne, Dr. Bland, Dr. C. W. Gordon, J. H. Morgan, Mr. McMillan have all been 'out strong' for the Liberal party. The Liberal party stood for temperance, better school laws, clean politics. I'm sorry they were so badly defeated."

But now, in June 1913, politics stepped right into the Methodist Conference. E. L. Taylor, M.P.P. for Gimli, had been accused by the *Free Press* and the *Tribune* of having secured his election wrongfully by such methods as browbeating, cajoling, bribing and buying the foreign vote. Mr. Taylor was a prominent member of the Methodist Church. He was also a personal friend of the Woodsworth family. But Father did not hesitate. He introduced into the Conference a resolution demanding that the

### *J. S. Woodsworth*

newspapers should either prove or withdraw their charges, and that Mr Taylor should either clear himself or resign his seat.

As may be imagined, a veritable hornet's nest had been stirred up. Mr Taylor was a Conservative, and the *Telegram*, also of that persuasion, angrily accused J. S. Woodsworth of being in on a Liberal conspiracy to unseat the Gmsh member. Controversy stirred the Methodist Conference too, but the resolution, amended to delete the clause calling on Mr Taylor to clear himself, but still demanding that the newspapers prove their charges or withdraw, was finally passed. Charges and counter-charges were hurled about in the press with political vigour until finally the storm blew itself out with no action taken by any of the parties concerned.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOCIAL SERVICE WORKER

FINALLY convinced that the Church was not prepared to give the leadership required for coping with the great social problems of the community, J. S. Woodsworth looked about for some other agency which could be effective. *My Neighbor* had signalled his readiness for a new means of carrying on his work, but no such means presented itself. Two years were to pass before he was able to make the change, years in which he took his part in forging the new instrument.

In 1910 he had been responsible for a meeting at Stella Avenue Mission where the League of Social Service Workers was formed, its purpose being to secure greater co-ordination of effort. Two years later, on a trip to eastern Canada and the United States in the interests of the Mission, he had attended the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in Cleveland where he met nationally-known figures in the social service field.

On May 7, 1913, he announced his intention of resigning from All People's Mission at the end of the church year in June. His associates expressed regret and wondered what new church assignment awaited him. But already he had taken the next step. The newspapers of May 31 reported that, at a meeting held the previous night, measures had been taken to organize what would be known as the Canadian Welfare League. A draft constitution had been adopted and a provisional committee chosen. Among the names of Winnipeggers prominent in various social service fields was that of J. S. Woodsworth. He had been named as secretary of the new organization which, it was hoped, would be launched at the Canadian Conference of

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Charities and Corrections to be held in Winnipeg in the fall.

That summer my father plunged into a fever of fresh activity in preparation for the coming organization. In July he attended the United States Conference of Charities and Corrections in Seattle. On his way home he visited key social service workers in Canadian cities and addressed public meetings. Perhaps the most interesting printed survival of that summer is an advertisement in the *Nanaimo Free Press* of August 9

"A Public Meeting under the Auspices of the United Mine Workers of America will be held on the Waterfront near the Post Office, Sunday, Aug. 10th, 4 p.m. Rev J. S. Woodsworth, Minister of Trades and Labor Council of the City of Winnipeg, will address the meeting. Formerly Superintendent of All People's Mission, at present Organizer of Canadian Welfare League."

The miners must have had other things on their minds as they listened to the man advertised as "Minister of Trades and Labor Council of the City of Winnipeg." That Sunday was the day before the outbreak of the great Nanaimo Strike that shook the West Coast to its foundations. In many a subsequent speech J. S. Woodsworth was to explain the strikers' case to Canadian audiences.

During that summer a number of trenchant articles came from his pen. Here is an excerpt from a series of four articles on "A Workman's Budget", written for the *Christian Guardian*, official organ of the Methodist Church. Evidently Father did not despair of enlisting the aid of the Church, even though he had abandoned hope of its leadership. He wrote

"We give in detail conditions found in one home in which the man is receiving so-called fair wages. In this case the man's wages of \$720 are supplemented by the earnings of the wife to the extent of about \$200, which brings the income over \$900. The family is larger than usual—six children but clothing costs practically nothing, being supplied by private charity.

"The man is a painter in the railroad shops. [His] outlook may be of interest. He was particularly concerned about his fellow-

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employees who are receiving, not like himself, 36 cents an hour, but many, 17½ to 20 cents, with a possible rise to 27 cents an hour. There was little chance of obtaining a foreman's position, as foremen's jobs were limited and advancement was through favour. Public affairs were largely in the hands of those looking for 'graft'. The Church was not a factor in the situation. It was supported by wealthy men. Where, then, any hope? A change of system (he produced *Cotton's Weekly*) do away with rent, interest and profits.

"What would you do if you were in this man's shoes?"

That J. S. Woodsworth was coming to share this man's outlook is evident from a paragraph in another of his articles for the same paper and entitled "A Programme of Social Reform"

"Probably it will be found that there is no satisfactory way of protecting the poor and the less able against the exploitation of the rich and clever except public ownership, and only through community ownership can these be secured to the poor all things necessary to a proper, healthful and happy human life at cost price."

A far cry this, from the Mission Superintendent who five years earlier had written to the press after Christmas

"The distribution [of Christmas cheer] is over. Our workers are tired but happy. The joy of the little ones is complete. This year more homes have been gladdened by Christmas cheer and more generous and substantial gifts have been made than has hitherto been possible."

In mid-September, 1913, at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in Winnipeg, the Canadian Welfare League became a reality. Dr. J. Halpenny was president, J. S. Woodsworth was secretary, and there was a strong committee of nationally known social service workers which was later expanded to include representatives from coast to coast.

My father's dream of a social service centre was coming true. The purpose of the League was to promote a general interest in all forms of social welfare. It would "make a practical study of Canada's emergent social problems caused by our

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large and heterogeneous immigration, by the rapid growth of our cities and the stagnation of some of our rural districts, and by the beginnings of industrialism and generally our entrance into a fuller national life." A number of people may have had a hand in drafting that programme, but the imprint of J. S. Woodsworth is unmistakable.

All the work would not be done at the centre. The League planned to enlist citizens everywhere in personal service for the common welfare. In each community it would federate or otherwise organize for co-operation existing social institutions so that their work would become more effective. It aimed to provide trained leaders for social work. From the central bureau would go out bulletins and lecturers. There would be close co-operation with Canadian Clubs, industrial bureaux, government departments, universities and other educational institutions, and with the various religious groups.

First steps included raising some \$4,000 to \$5,000 for the salary of the secretary as well as travelling and office expenses which it would cover. Some of the money came from membership fees. The secretary was able to secure the rest—with no strings attached, he emphasized—from Winnipeg's leading citizens who wished the venture well.

Thus began two and a half years of busy, purposeful activity through the Canadian Welfare League. Father was active in a wider community than before, but instead of having to divide his efforts among many scattered lines of work, he now had the great satisfaction of helping many individuals and many organizations to co-ordinate their work into one smoothly-flowing channel whose "organized helpfulness" would bring new life to Canadian communities everywhere. He was happy during these years in spite of the tremendous nervous strain he put upon himself by the intensity of his work, in spite of long periods of enforced separation from Mother whose steady encouragement was one of the sources of his strength, in spite of the long shadows of the coming world war which were beginning to

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project themselves across his path. Years before he had written to Mother of the joy he experienced in spending himself and being spent in the work to which he was devoting his life. The League gave him greater opportunities than ever before.

Methodically he set about realizing the purposes that had been growing in his mind for so long. His office became a consulting-room for social workers of all kinds, those who couldn't come in person came by letter, from Victoria to Halifax. (One of my childhood memories is of Father taking us to his office in the Industrial Bureau and letting us look endless numbers of stamps for his letters.) Publicity and information streamed out through the mails, into the press, and through the lectures which the secretary and others were constantly giving. My father was on the road a great deal of the time—in the fall of 1913 a trip to Edmonton where he helped to establish a civic welfare organization, the next spring a trip to the Maritimes with meetings in Ontario centres on the way home, in the fall of 1915 a prolonged stay in Montreal where he had contacts so varied as to be almost unbelievable, always in between-times, meetings on the prairies, particularly in rural Saskatchewan.

There, in the little country schoolhouses, by the light of coal-oil lanterns, he would set up his charts, drawing the sections of bamboo fishing-pole from their golf bag container and hoisting the chart aloft upon them like a triumphant sail. Getting the chart safely erected was itself an ice-breaking process which enlisted help and advice from those present and gave a close sense of participation even before the magnetic talk which drew them all into the bright circle of those who knew and cared about their fellow-humans. Colourful they were, these charts, and ample as bed-sheets. One I remember was like a great patchwork quilt, its irregular blocks of colour making the population designs of the three prairie provinces. This chart was the story of the national origins of the citizens of Western Canada.

My father was a born teacher. He held those audiences, large or small, at the tip of his pointer as he moved it around

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the chair. His speech was clear and direct, shot through with homely illustrations and familiar turns of phrase which gained new meaning as he used them in fresh settings. Mother used to say, in the biblical phrase, that he taught as one having authority. He made those listeners feel indispensable in the cause of a better Canada because he believed that they were indispensable. His faith in people and in their ultimate ability to master their own destiny together, never wavered. Years later, as a member of Parliament, he continued exactly this same type of work, with a slightly different emphasis. Then, as earlier, his deep faith in people was the secret of his tremendous influence over those with whom he came in contact.

His experiences across the country revealed to him the almost total lack of facilities for training social service workers, even while it emphasized the need for such personnel. He set up a Short Training Class in Social Work and conducted it with the help of specialists in the field. This course, initiated in the summer of 1914 and repeated the following year, was perhaps the first training class for social workers in Canada, although almost at the same time the University of Toronto established its department of social service training. In 1915 J. S. Woodsworth was one of its lecturers, his topics being "Rural Life in Canada" and "Immigration." At about the same time he gave a series of extension lectures at McGill University on immigration.

His talks in the little western schoolhouses had shown him the hunger of country people for ideas and idealism. He prepared a handbook, *Studies in Rural Citizenship*, which was authorized by the Canadian Council of Agriculture. Intended for study by farm groups of various kinds, it traced the origin and growth of institutions such as the home, the school, the church, marketing, tariffs, banking. It sought to provoke discussion on the present and future role of these and other familiar features of community life. It concluded hopefully with a section on international peace.

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But the secretary of the Canadian Welfare League wasn't content merely to explain the institutions of country life to those who lived there. In the *Gram Grower's Guide* he ran several series of articles on topics such as "Some Problems of City Life", "Sermons for the Unsatisfied", "The Larger Family". Here is a bit from one of these articles:

"At least in this world, souls are always incorporated in bodies, and to save a man, you must save his body, soul and spirit. To really save one man, you must transform the community in which he lives."

He wanted to knit up the country and city into one close fabric of national unity for the purpose of building national fellowship, the whole to be based on social justice. For him, Canada was the country where he had his closest responsibilities. The world was his neighbourhood, but Canada was his own backyard that must be cleaned up and kept clean before the world would be impressed with this country as a good neighbour.

In the fall of 1915 the secretary of the Canadian Welfare League reported on his second year's work. It had included 260 public addresses before organizations of students, business men, farmers, women, social workers, church groups and miscellaneous groups. In the latter was included his address to the Canadian Club of Winnipeg, an address which found itself in company with those of Major General Sam Hughes, Sir Robert Borden, Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson and other celebrities.

Reference has been made to his lectures at McGill University. This opportunity excited and pleased him enormously, even while he worried lest he fall short. A letter written to Mother from Montreal on October 16, 1915, shows his state of mind. (The italics are his).

"The Secretary of the Canadian Welfare League is to give a course of free Extension Lectures (8 lectures) on Canadian Immigration Problems under the auspices of the University. These are the very first extension lectures given in McGill, so that, in itself, sets a valuable precedent in popular education in Montreal."

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Really I couldn't have struck a better scheme for carrying out the purposes of the League, at least so far as Montreal is concerned.

"If only I can 'make good' at these lectures! But I sometimes feel, with my limited knowledge and remote academic training that I am 'working a bluff' on these university people. For example, the Philosophical (Students') Society has asked me for a paper. I don't know anything about philosophy or psychology—and I would like very well to meet this group—so I think I'll accept—and I have been wondering if I can only get time to read a book or so on Social Psychology—a field unknown in my day—whether I could not work in some immigration matter. What do you think of a paper on 'The Shock' of Migration, using 'shock' in a technical sense and then giving a missionary talk! I've half a mind to risk it!"

The lectures were well received and resulted in still more invitations to put his ideas before the public. Six weeks later he wrote to Mother

"You will be glad to know that I'm reaching quite a French public. Hence Bourassa's paper says that I'm the first English-speaking Canadian that has gotten hold of their ideal for Canada. Rather dangerous from *Le Devoir*!"

In J. S. Woodsworth's use of the exclamation mark was often included a certain humorous irony, never more apparent than in that last sentence. His views on the war, which had been in progress for over a year, had brought him very close to the ideas of French Canada along foreign policy lines. Then, as always, he regretted his inability to speak the language. "It does seem stupid not to know French," he had written to Mother.

His letter about *Le Devoir* told also of recent contacts in the Jewish community

"At night attended as guest of honour the Montefiore Club—the fashionable Jewish Club—a fine up-to-date club house—and you know I'm becoming quite a connoisseur in such matters! And I'm asked before I go to speak in the Temple Emmanuel. I think I'll do it. The Rabbi is a decent, broad-minded American. But I

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fancy the thing is unprecedented. I suppose I'll come in for some criticism. But if I have any message which they are willing to hear, why not? Then in this particular case we can always meet objections by suggesting that the founder of Christianity preached in the synagogue."

Criticism of his talks came, but on a different point. My father was caustic about it. "By the way, the Ottawa Forum is coming in for some criticism from the church people. They don't like discussions on 'secular subjects', and yet hold recruiting meetings in the churches!"

Perhaps the best way to gain some idea of the pace and variety of his work at this time is to take the highlights from one letter to Mother. Written on November 14, 1915, it is typical.

"By the date I note that the Montreal period is half over. It is astonishing how the time slips by! . . . Well, I didn't get at this letter again yesterday (Sunday) as the day proved to be a very full one. In the morning was at Mountain Street Methodist [Church] . . . Had dinner with the preacher . . . In the afternoon at the Rosemount Presbyterian Brotherhood away in the north east . . . On the way called in to see Prof. Brown re the Forum and left him an article I had written for the *McGill Daily*. Hurried back and had some coffee and then to Westmount . . . Small congregation in a beautiful new [Congregational] church though everything very stiff.

"Had an interesting conversation with Mr. Dougall of The Witness. He is much concerned about the lack of efficiency in the Church. He said that I had told them about the needs but not how the Church could meet the needs. He thought that the saving of the Church was the most pressing need. I tell you that before long the Church will be crying in vain for leadership. How hardly shall they that have riches enter the Kingdom! They have isolated themselves from the people and then wonder why they cannot see their needs. . . ."

Following the evening service he went to the home of one of the church members where he talked till late. The letter recapit-

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tulates his doings of the previous week. Tuesday, an interview over tea, another interview in his room during the evening. Wednesday, his extension lecture at McGill attendance at the Women's Directory annual meeting and a visit to the William Lund School of Social Work. Another day, lunch with J. J. Harpell, president of the Educational and Industrial Press whose "independence and idealism are really inspiring" and who invited him to write for his paper, *The Journal of Commerce*, whenever he desired to do so. Also "Le Devoir is giving me a column every Monday and this has brought forth a private letter to Le Devoir from Sir Wilfrid Laurier."<sup>\*</sup>

"On Friday Dr. Arbetson (Roman Catholic) lectured for me and had lunch with me. He is really quite a remarkable man. . . . On Saturday morning talked to the Social Workers again. On Saturday evening had a long time with my little group at the Y.M.C.A."

Not did he escape the attentions of feminine admirers.

"I have been called away for a quarter of an hour's conversation from my gushing friend, Mrs. X., who tells me how wonderfully she appreciates my messages—the messages of a modern prophet, and how she is drawn to my personality! But she is quite kind-hearted and however she has managed it is 'in the twin' and has just invited me to attend a meeting of the Montreal Women's Club."

That's a sketch of a typical week's activities.

He was always conscious of the great burden thrown upon Mother by his long absences during which she had the full care of the home and children. In these earlier years he constantly sought and she constantly gave reassurances that she was with him heart and soul in his work. That was why he was able to write her as he did on November 20, 1915.

"I'm glad to be reassured that you are not becoming a Mrs. Podger (was it in the Tale of Two Cities?) who took to undoing by her prayers her husband's illegitimate work. Really, Lucy, this is great work. Think of going into Stanstead and talking to all sorts and

<sup>\*</sup> Careful search in 1950 by both M. Haroux, editor of *Le Devoir*, and M. Henri Larocque failed to reveal any trace of this letter.

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conditions in the theatre meeting and having everyone wondering why they didn't think of it before! Yesterday's Forum here went off very well, I'm told. Sometimes I can almost dream that we are on the eve of a new social and moral movement akin to the Reformation or other of the great movements of history. It's no fun to be carrying on in the wilderness, but still there would be compensations if one were doing something of the work of a John the Baptist.

"And then it's wonderful that we can be together in this work. I felt yesterday that you were right that we shouldn't give up yet. So when I get discouraged, you'll have to keep me going. Mr Dobson has two beautiful children. His little girl of nine is a very lovable child. I felt hungry for our own little ones."

## CHAPTER VIII

### CIVIL SERVANT DISMISSED

EARLY in 1916 the war brought an abrupt end to the Canadian Welfare League. Its president sent out a letter explaining the situation—war needs had dried up its sources of funds so that it could no longer carry on. However, the work of the League would go forward, thanks to the governments of the three prairie provinces. They proposed jointly to establish a Bureau of Social Research with functions very similar to those of the League. Further, they had asked J. S. Woodsworth to become its secretary, and the League had urged him to accept the position.

And so Father continued his work. Government backing enabled him to call upon greater resources than ever before. On December 18 he presented his report for nine months' work. It included three prairie-wide surveys. One, a survey of rural communities, had been made with the help of rural teachers, clergymen and Women's Institutes. Another was a preliminary report on a survey of mental defectives in the three provinces. The third was a careful study of Ukrainians in Western Canada, made by a house-to-house canvass of over five hundred Ukrainian homes and great numbers of questionnaires to persons with information. The report mentioned that the secretary had given 124 public addresses and scores of interviews. Then it outlined plans for the coming year's work, including an inquiry into child welfare, a study of social conditions among the Germans in Western Canada, and a study of the effect of anti-crime legislation.

The Bureau was gathering momentum. Daily the need for its work had become more evident. The secretary had

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demonstrated his ability to ensure its fullest development. All signs pointed to fruitful years ahead. And then, with dramatic suddenness, everything stopped. That first report also became the last. The painstaking surveys were never published. The plans for the future died, stillborn. Within a month the Bureau had closed its doors for the last time.

The cause of this sudden death was a letter J. S. Woodsworth had written it just four days after presenting his report. It was a public reply to a circular issued under Federal Government auspices to those who might prove helpful in forwarding the new National Service Registration. The circular was signed by R. B. Bennett, director of the scheme, and later Prime Minister of Canada. My father sent his reply to the *Manitoba Free Press* who published it on December 28. It read as follows:

"Yesterday morning there came to me a circular letter asking my help in making the National Service Registration scheme a success. As I am opposed to that scheme, it would seem my duty as a citizen to state that opposition and the grounds on which it is based. For this end I would ask the courtesy of your columns in presenting the following considerations:

"(1) The citizens of Canada have been given no opportunity of expressing themselves with regard to the far-reaching principle involved in this matter.

"(2) Since 'life is more than meat and the body more than raiment', conscription of material possessions should in all justice precede an attempt to force men to risk their lives and the welfare of their families.

"(3) It is not at all clear who is to decide whether or not a man's present work is of national importance. It is stated that the brewery workers in England are exempt. What guarantee have we that Canadian decisions will be any more sound, and who are the members of the board that determines the question of such importance to the individual?

"(4) How is registration or subsequent conscription, physical or

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moral, to be enforced? Is intimidation to be used? Is blacklisting to be employed? What other methods?

"Is this measure to be equally enforced across the country? For example, in Quebec, or among the Mennonites in the West?

"This registration is no mere census. It seems to look in the direction of a measure of conscription. As some of us cannot conscientiously engage in military service, we are bound to resist what—if the war continues—will inevitably lead to forced service."

J. S. Woodsworth was called at once before the Cabinet Minister in charge of the Bureau of Social Research. He took the uncompromising stand that it was his duty to express his convictions and that he intended to continue doing so. A few days later he received a letter stating briefly that the Bureau would be closed on January 31, "or some days later as may be necessary for you to finish the work in hand."

For my father it was as though his life's work had been sharply cut off. Over the years he had dreamed and worked with growing maturity to realize his dreams. Wider and wider circles of opportunity had spread around him. He had become known and respected wherever thoughtful Canadians gathered together. Now, in his forty-fourth year, with his full powers developing, the future had been bright with promise. He had renounced that future in the full knowledge of what he was doing, but the cost was staggering.

Mother was with him, steady in her courage. They had discussed this course together many times, realizing its implications. Neither of them was in good health at the time. With their six children, the youngest only three months old, they knew they would face a hard and uncertain future. They would meet opposition and bitterness. Their families on both sides would feel the repercussions. Their children might be condemned to life-long poverty, might be warped by the scorn of others, might be forced to lose all chance of a good education.

Together they had discussed these things and worried about

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them. Then they had decided that, come what might, the price of cowardly silence was too great to pay. Father must speak out against war or everlastingly forfeit his self-respect. Love of Father and love of Truth were always the greatest things in Mother's life. He knew that she could never bear to think of him being less than the truth that was in him. For both of them there was only one course to follow—the course of the truth as they saw it.

J. S. Woodsworth's hatred of war was a burning, passionate thing that flamed more fiercely every day he lived. War was a foul monster that killed and maimed human beings, that stripped them of humanity and left them brutes. Not only did it destroy people and all that they had created, not only did it blot out their hard-won liberties, but it distorted the very ideas of right and justice upon which mankind was painfully trying to build a rational world. War was the hell that killed hope for the future. War was the ultimate evil.

The roots of my father's feelings about war ran far back into his life. But unlike most of the roots of his convictions, they did not come directly to him from his parents. They had never been faced by the actual fact of war. Indeed, the existence of war as a real thing in his generation did not confront him until after his twenty-sixth birthday. As he was to write forty years later:

"In school and college days war was not an issue. War belonged to history. It was the memorizing of the dates from the Punic wars down that caused me the most worry. We had few soldiers or military parades. There was little ethical teaching with regard to war."

But suddenly, during that year of mental and emotional ferment at Oxford, when all his ethical values were molten in the crucible of his criticism and new ideals were white-hot within him, he was hit by the shock of the Boer War. Curiously enough his first reference to it is in the only letter he

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wrote to his grandmother from Oxford, and the comment is what one would expect from any sensitive person.

"You would particularly notice the earnest prayers (in the churches) concerning the soldiers in Africa. Of course many of them have friends right here. Every day the list of casualties is eagerly scanned with the hope that the name of no loved one will be found there."

That was on December 3, 1899. Almost the next day he left for a short stay at Mansfield House, the East London Social Settlement which awoke him so sharply to the facts of industrial life. From there he wrote to his father on December 11

"In the afternoon there was a meeting in the Hall, called the P.S.A.—Pleasant Sunday Afternoon—a political or social rather than a religious meeting. We heard Atherley-Jones, M.P. (Lib., Durham) speak on the British Foreign Policy. The war was strongly denounced and this attitude applauded by the audience—of course working men."

Six days later he wrote his mother

"Here I am in the 'Common Room' at Mansfield House. This is a kind of sitting-room where the men generally sit and discuss any questions of interest. Now I hear the talk around me is about the war. This is the topic of all-absorbing interest in England now. The papers are full of it. You hear it in every public place. Most of the men here in the House are much opposed to the war. They think the English are in the wrong. The other day I heard a large audience of working men cheer a speaker who denounced the war. Indeed it does seem a very great question as to whether we are justified or not. Now I know Harold [his brother] will object to this. Let him remember that the Boers are his cousins [a reference to their mother's Dutch ancestry] and that they are fighting for their liberty. Why should England be supreme in South Africa? Our losses have been dreadful. Then here in England we have the widows and children."

Already J. S. Woodsworth's hatred of war was rooting itself in the deep soil from which it was to draw strength all his

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life. At Oxford he had been impressed by the grief and anxiety of those whose loved ones were caught up in war. This had deepened as he lived among those who were most involved and least able to protect themselves—the poor. War became something into which the poor and helpless were shovelled by the privileged and powerful. And not only the poor and helpless of England. Worse still, these were forced to enslave their brothers, the poor and helpless of other lands, to deprive them of even the little they had. Why? Why?

Later he was to find his answers to that bitter question. At the moment he was stricken and revolted by the inhuman wickedness and cruelty of it all. "The Empire" and "Imperialism" became for him terms to express tyranny and oppression of the blackest kind. Five months later, on May 19, 1900, he wrote to his mother from Oxford:

"Mafeking relieved!" I suppose the whole British Empire is rejoicing to-day. Have just returned from a walk down town. I do not think I ever saw such universal rejoicing. Sleepy old Oxford with its blackened walls was probably never so gay before. There is hardly a house but is decorated with flags. Strings of flags overhang the streets and bunting is everywhere. Everyone is happy and if not talking is humming or whistling some patriotic air. The streets are crowded so that one has hard work to get along.

"Before I had gone far I was accosted by a beggar. Of course he tried to work on my patriotic feelings long before he urged humanitarian or religious motives.

"The red, white and blue are everywhere. Carts and carriages, trams and cabs, bicycles and perambulators—are buried beneath their flags. The lady in her carriage and the coster woman at her stand, the reverend parson and the newsboy, alike wear the 'colours of the Empire'. An immense St Bernard dog, wrapped in a Union Jack, carries around a box for contributions to the 'Transvaal Relief Fund', and the very smallest terrier seems to swell with importance as he exhibits his tri-coloured collar.

"I often used to wonder what it was really like in wartime. Well, we are right in it now. And what diverse opinions and sentiments

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are held! One catches snatches of sentences on every street corner 'Majuba', 'our brave foet', 'cowardly villains', 'the Empire', 'the capitalists', 'freedom'. Yet to-day one phrase is universal 'Mafeking relieved!'

A few days later he added to the same letter

"The town has been quite demoralized since Friday. Probably things will quiet down after the 24th [the Queen's birthday]. Last night people were still celebrating. But Saturday night was the great night. The streets were packed. I don't know where the people came from. There were great bonfires, one unfinished house being demolished for fuel. Horns and pans made a dreadful row. The crowd was singing

"The house of a brother of Baden Powell was surrounded. A torchlight procession carried around an effigy of Kruger, then hanged and burned him amid the shouts of the crowd. Everyone did just as he liked. The police were too wise to try to keep order. The proctors kept loyally out of sight. The utmost licence prevailed. Crowds of variety men and others swept along the streets, kissing the servants and shop girls. And of course they were highly pleased that 'university gentlemen' should notice them even if they were drunk. Such is English society! It always strikes me as odd to hear these fellows singing lustily, 'Britons never shall be slaves!' But customs here are not like ours. Nor have they the same standards of right and wrong."

The stupid, unthanking revelry of the mob depressed him, but his deep disgust was reserved for his fellow-students, the sons of gentlemen, the future pillars of English society. These were the people who should know better, who should be setting an example to those less fortunate. In London's East End he had heard reasoned opposition to war, in Oxford's privileged streets he heard the drunken singing of "Rule Britannia". The roots of his hatred of war struck deeper into the soil.

All these impressions lay more or less dormant until six years later when poor health forced him to take a year's rest from his work in the ministry and when he concluded his European trip

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with a short visit to Palestine. With deep reverence he visited the holy places of the Bible, spending a "sacred hour" in the Garden of Gethsemane, consecrating himself once more to the service of God and his fellow-man. Then in a mood of profound emotion he set out for home by way of Britain. An article he wrote in 1939 tells the next part of the story.

"On returning from a visit to Palestine and Egypt, one of my fellow-passengers on the boat was a young British civil engineer. He told me in some detail how British and other European nations were extending their possessions in Africa. The typical procedure was something like this: a white trader would open up business with a native tribe, some quarrel ensued, the blacks killed a white man, of course the blacks must be punished and taught their place, there was an attack on a native village, other villages rallied to repel the whites, an expeditionary force became necessary, this involved the establishment of a protectorate to maintain law and order and teach the natives to govern themselves, it was only another step to colonial status. So grew the British Empire and other Empires.

"On my return to London I visited the Army and Navy museums—a vast collection of British war flags, war-trophies, the torn and blood-stained flags and tattered uniforms taken from defeated armies, the wretched rags torn from the corpses of natives from almost every part of the world. I left the Museum sick at heart and almost sick at my stomach. So this is Empire! Subsequent study only confirmed the impressions of that day."

Father's hatred of war burned deeper. Militarism, national aggrandizement, commercial exploitation—the whole hell's-broth whipped up with false patriotism and appeals to the baser elements in human emotion—the atrocity was appearing in final hideous shape. Later he would learn more of the shocking details of profiteering and publicity, and he still had to encounter what was for him the crowning indignity—the Church lending her support to war in the name of Jesus—but by the time my father returned to Canada at the end of 1906, he brought with him all the essential elements of his convictions and feeling about war. Nor did subsequent events change the basic pattern. He

felt that he had settled the matter in his own mind once for all and that there could be no point in his re-examining it. Indeed he frequently said so, particularly during his last years when the rise of fascism was compelling many of his associates to revise similar views about war. As he lay ill during the final weeks of his life, I remember him saying very firmly "Forty years ago I made up my mind about war. I don't intend to change it now."

In 1912 there were already rumblings of the approaching world war. The *Winnipeg Telegram* of March 23 carried an editorial advocating military training. Two days later my father published a letter in opposition to the idea. But actual war had been under way for more than a year before his smouldering feelings burst into flame. It was during his lecture trip to Montreal as secretary of the Canadian Welfare League. His letter to *Mother* of October 4, 1915, was a cry of anger and grief.

"In the evening I went to St. James Methodist Church to a recruiting meeting. Really Lucy, if I weren't on principle opposed to spectacular methods, I would have gotten up and denounced the whole performance as a perversion—a damnable perversion, if you like—of the teachings of Jesus, and a profanation of the day and the house set apart for Divine Worship. War exhortations from the Hebrew prophets—it was significant that there was no New Testament lesson—war authors and hymns with war phrases, sung as war hymns. The national airs of the allied nations rendered by the organ.

"In the pulpit Sir [Thomas] Tait, the head of the Citizens' Recruiting Committee, Sir Wm. Peterson, president of the University, General Meighen, and Rev. Williams—a bad combination—business, the university, the army and the church' .

"A deliberate attempt was made through a recital of the abominable acts of the Germans, to stir up the spirit of hatred and retaliation. The climax was reached when the pastor in an impassioned appeal stated that if any young man could go and did not go he was neither a Christian nor a patriot. No! The climax was the announcement that recruiting sergeants were stationed at the doors

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of the church and that any man of spirit—any lover of his country—any follower of Jesus—should make his decision then and there!

"I felt like doing something desperate—forswearing church attendance—repudiating any connection with the Church."

A quarter of a century later his recollection of this experience concluded "I walked the streets all night."

Letters, clippings and articles of this period all give evidence of the tremendous strain through which he was going, a strain which was very shortly to affect his health. That same year he wrote a Christmas article for the *Manitoba Free Press*, but it was rejected, the *Labour Voice* published it in mid-February. It was an appeal for peace for world brotherhood in place of national hatreds. It was an appeal for cool reason and fair-mindedness, even in the midst of war. It was an assertion that the causes of war are not the evil traits of Germans or Austrians or peoples of any other kind, but rather militarism, political autocracy and commercialism. It was an expression of the belief that "Christianity must leaven our business methods and organization, our political practices and institutions, and our national ideals and relations before we shall have permanent peace." It gave a poignant picture of Christmas, the season of joy and homecoming, while "on this winter's night, as the winds howl outside, we think of the shivering men in the trenches, and the cold, quiet forms on which the wars look pityingly down. May there not be one day's truce?—one hour in which the nations of Christendom may confess the common hope, now blighted, but destined one day to grow into faith and blossom in love."

He called his article "Out of the Night, the Angels' Song." In rejecting it the *Free Press* wrote

"We cannot but admire the candour of this contribution, and congratulate you on its literary value; yet there are some things which at this time a public journal may not do."

There were some things too which at that time a man in a public position might not do—and keep his position. Father knew it well. All through 1916 he pondered the matter, alone and with Mother

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

Should he stay silent and safe when his conscience bade him denounce the evil of war? No doubt he often thought of that other hour of trial when Jesus was taken to the top of a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of this world which might be his if he would but bow down to serve evil. In the face of sore temptation Jesus had met the test and had shown the way to those who sought to follow his teachings. Surely if one were in earnest there could be only one course to follow. J. S. Woodsworth took that course.

The days following the closing of the Bureau of Social Research were sad and depressing. Most of my father's associates and acquaintances shunned him, leaving him to find his way alone, many of them did not seek his society again until he had been a member of Parliament for years. His own father had died the day before the Bureau closed, leaving the memory of a steadfast counsellor and friend whose understanding had been ever-present in earlier times of stress. Another close friend, A. V. Thomas—also a pacifist—had to leave Winnipeg to seek in New York the newspaper employment his convictions denied him at home.

Long months of anxiety before their crucial decision had been hard on the health of both my parents; neither was in good condition to face the uncertainties of the future, neither knew where to turn at this moment. They decided that they must have a breathing-spell, an interval of rest with a chance to look round and get their bearings again. They would take their small savings, go out to the West Coast, spend a little time in Victoria where they would decide on the next step. But first Mother would take the two youngest children and visit her people in Ontario, for no one knew when she would have another opportunity. Meanwhile Father would wind up the work of the Bureau and do the family packing. It must have seemed the last straw to him when the four children took ill with mumps! However, he proved equal to every emergency, and in April the eight of us left for the West Coast.

## CHAPTER IX

### GIBSON'S LANDING

FOR us children, the eldest reaching adolescence, Gibson's Landing was a place of magic, an enchanted clearing surrounded by deep forests, dark with rain or luminous with the sunshine sifting through the heavy layers of green, of trails that wound from the familiar stony roads of the shorefront up through the mossy forest until they lost themselves in the mystery of the mountain. It was the wonder of the sea, lapping against the islands or stretching itself in a path of gold beneath the moon, lashing the Point in white-capped fury or veiling itself in the driving mists of the rain. It was the majesty of the Britannia Range, its snow-crested peaks high and straight above the waters like a great wall between us and the world we had known, a great wall coloured by the gold of morning sunshine, the rose of sunset, and the shifting blues of every hour and

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For us children Gibson's Landing was a new world of endless possibilities, "the place specially made for us", as Father records me saying when we first saw it. He helped us find Dragon Castle, a blackened tree stump near the parsonage, "a suck", they called it locally, thirty feet high and large enough for us all to go inside at once. Father thrilled us and chilled us with his imaginary tales of what lay on the other side of Mount Elphinstone. He took us for long walks through the deep woods festooned with ghostly moss, until the shadows of twilight overtook us and kept us very close together. We went with him to visit the people at the Landing and on the Hill, listening avidly to their memories of the far places of their childhood. Gibson's Landing for us was beauty and wonder and dreams.

For Father and Mother it must have been something quite different. The mountain walls stood between them and their world, cutting them off from the past and barring the way to the future. At the beginning Gibson's Landing must have seemed to them the beautiful graveyard of all their hopes.

In the course of our seven weeks' stay in Victoria, my father had decided that he would try Church work once again. Perhaps in a frontier community he could find an outlet for his need to serve his fellows, perhaps there the war would seem more remote and less challenging as a daily issue. Arrangements were made for him to take charge of the Howe Sound mission field. We moved to Gibson's Landing in June. Father's description of his parish was given in his report to the Methodist Conference a year later. Some excerpts are interesting.

"The mission extends along the coast from Port Mellon to Sechart—a distance of twenty-five miles, and includes the adjacent islands, Bowen, Keats and Gambier. In the whole district some 140 families. In addition several logging camps, shingle belt camps,—white, Chinese, Japanese and Hindu.

"A few pioneer settlers had homesteads here twenty-five years ago. The majority, however, have come within the past ten years. Up till recently income from the land supplemented by road work and logging and the sale of part of the homestead as acreage. Since harder times many families have moved away. In the case of those who remain, the men in most cases leave home to go to work for part of the year, leaving their wives to care for the children, the garden and chickens, and a pig or cow. In a number of cases the men are at the front. For farming, the only hope is government assistance with land-clearing and co-operative effort, especially in marketing. Campers help the settlement but cannot build a strong community.

"At Gibson's, jealousy between 'the Landing' and the people on the 'Hill',—i.e. English-speaking vs. Finnish—The Finnish people are materialistic socialists. The majority of the people are largely indifferent to church services. This seems due to a series of causes—irregularity of services in the early days, the absence of men from

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home, the difficulty of women getting to church, especially with their children, an unfortunate scandal some years ago in which a minister was involved the materialistic teaching of the socialists, and generally a participation in the changes and uncertainties in the religious thought of the time."

This unstable, colourful community was to teach my father many things. On its side, the community learned surprisingly quickly that the mild mannered pastor from the east had many things to teach Gibson's Landing, many things which it had not been led to expect from its spiritual advisers. He got a gasboat (in our prairie ignorance we called it a launch), which he named the *Good Will*, and he learned to run it. Probably no man was ever born who knew less about machinery than Father, but he learned how to run that engine! Mother and the six children went with him into rough seas and calm, sharing his anxiety when sudden storms overtook us in the Sound, helping to steer or bail out water while he nursed the engine, often sitting, more or less patiently, while we waited for some passing fisherman to notice our plight when the engine stalled. And he held regular services on the islands belonging to the mission visiting every soul he could reach, Methodist or not.

He started out on foot to visit all the residents of the Landing and, to the disgust of many Landing people, all the Finnish homes on the Hill. When he found the distances too great he got a horse called Paddy who must have been glad to cover the miles with him rather than to have the rest of us boisterously tumbling on and off his back at home. It didn't take Father long to find out about the jealousy between Landing and Hill nor to discover its focal point, the local Landing storekeeper who aimed to run the whole settlement and resented any interference. When the Hill people, aided and abetted by the doctor from the Landing, set up a co-operative store, the two factions became more sharply divided. The fact that Father became an active member of the Co-operative, and that we children trailed along the dusty road with parcels from the Co-op, did not make

the other storekeeper any more friendly to the new manner.

One thing that isolated the Finnish hill-dwellers was that many of them, particularly the women, could speak very little English. My parents held regular classes at the parsonage on Monday afternoons where they taught the Finnish women English over friendly cups of tea, and where the Finnish women told them of the greed and corruption of the Russian church at home which had finally alienated them, made them Marxian socialists, and driven them to seek better living conditions in Canada. Father decided that some agency other than the Church must be found to try to bring the community together. In his 1918 report to Conference he told of his solution

"At the Howe Sound School we organized a community 'Friday Night' which was maintained for seven months till the spring work opened up. The attendance ran from 30 to 60 and was very representative of all sections of the community. The lectures and discussions were educational in character. Several evenings were given to school matters, several to agricultural and neighbourhood questions, a number to various phases of socialism and social reform, two to the women's movement. The printing press, sex hygiene, [the] basis of permanent peace, the experiences of a returned soldier, various nationalities in Canada, were other topics. At the election [federal] each candidate was given an evening. The secondary school joined with the day school in a Community Christmas Tree Entertainment.

"Prof. Hetherington, Judge Grant and Mr. [Wm.] Pritchard, a socialist, were the only outside speakers during the season. Although a few did not join heartily in these meetings, we believe that prejudices were broken down and a contribution made in the development of a community spirit and the life of the district enriched."

The memory of those meetings is indelibly printed on my mind, for they were almost the only form of community entertainment that first winter and I was allowed to attend a good many. The speaker stood in a little circle of light from the carbide lamp high above the teacher's desk, earnestly address-

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ing the shadowy faces rising from the darkness of the schoolroom. When he finished, there was prolonged and lively discussion, participants making up in vigour what they lacked in form. Sometimes a dispute rose between one of the Finnish socialists and a British outpost of Empire. Accents and expletives amusing to younger ears would fly about in the shadows, tones becoming more vehement, attitudes more menacing. Finally the burly, red-haired Finnish disputant who so often figured in these battles would sum up the world scene of war and potential revolution with relish and certainty. "Things is lookin' pretty good for our side." Unnerved by the sight of one who welcomed violent upheaval, the Landing protagonist would subside; the audience, realizing that the show was over, would pull their cramped bodies from the school desks and prepare for the dark walk home through the dripping woods. Soon the school was quite deserted. In every direction could be seen the little "bugs", homemade lanterns made with a candle set sideways in a lard-pail bobbing along the trails like tiny stars, guiding the tired folk home to bed.

Among the few who did not join in these meetings was the storekeeper. He was superintendent of the Sunday School and kept a close eye on the church services. He and my father clashed when the latter refused to read war bulletins from the pulpit on Sundays and would permit no one else to do so. The storekeeper thought of himself as a patriot but the Finnish people shook their heads and smiled cynically. It was a closely-guarded community secret that back in the faunesses of Mount Elphinstone there was a draft evaders' camp. No one knew much about it till later, but sometimes men from the Hill would carry away huge loads of groceries from the Landing store and disappear with them away up the mountain trails. The storekeeper had never sold such quantities of supplies to those Hill families before. But he asked no questions.

From the first, my father made no secret of his opposition to the war. His attitude antagonized some of the Landing

people, while it gained support from others. It was plain that in his hostility to the new minister the storekeeper had some backing from good, solid citizens, but our family had the respect and liking of most of the people. Particularly we enjoyed the warm friendship of the doctor's family, we were to live in a part of their home very shortly. There were six children in their family—four boys and two girls, as in ours—and they were of approximately the same ages as ourselves. Several of us found our first close friend in our "twin" in the doctor's family. With such a family for support, we weren't greatly concerned about the rest of the world. With school work, household chores, music practice and fun in the wide outdoors the days sped by all too quickly.

But activity did not solve Father's problem for him. His conscience had begun to bother him again. Here he was, a man opposed to the war, serving a church that supported it. Such a position was dishonest, intolerable. A letter to his mother in September, 1917, came as close to bitterness as he ever did. He began by describing his sermon of the previous night where he had criticized the proposed War Times Election Act for disfranchising conscientious objectors and giving the vote only to the wives of men in the armed services instead of to all women. He went on:

"So I suppose, Mother, with your pastor a colonel or captain or something—and Young Church a recruiting station—you'll find it hard to swallow such 'treason'! Why yes, I suppose such teaching lays me open to arrest, only up here in Siberia who cares what a harassed man may say to a few women and old men—about all that are left! On Bowen Island there is scarcely an able-bodied man in the settlement. Family after family living alone in the woods—the husband and father somewhere in France!

"You say, 'Be cheerful.' I am, except when I think or except when I see the deprivations of those about me or read of the suffering of those in Europe. 'Be cheerful' 'obey man rather than God'—'disobey the heavenly vision'—crush down those who don't think



Wm. H. Mumford

J. S. AUGUSTUS SMITH, SENIOR, 1899



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as I do. Teach hatred and strife to the little ones in the schools. Deny the principles of democracy. Curse your enemies and honour the war-makers. Well, it may come to that, but it comes slowly. You ought to have encouraged me to fight at school and play for keeps if you wanted me to be a patriot or to be a success!"

Gradually the year wore away, with him less and less happy about his position in the church. While the storekeeper and his cronies sat around the stove debating the relative merits of hanging the Kaiser plain, or turning him upside down and illuminating him with darts of burning pitch, he wrestled with his conscience. Once again he had reached a crisis in his life. He had become convinced that he could no longer remain a minister of the Church and continue true to his ideals.

On June 8, 1918, he submitted his resignation to Rev. A. E. Smith, then president of the Manitoba Conference of the Methodist Church and who was later to become one of the leaders of the Communist Party in Canada. In his resignation J. S. Woodsworth summed up the long history of his intellectual and moral quest for truth. Because of its importance in his life, I quote it here in full, with the exception of a brief introductory passage.

"Within a short time after my ordination I was much troubled because my beliefs were not those that were commonly held and preached. The implications of the newer theological teaching that I had received from my B.D. course and in post-graduate work at Oxford revealed themselves with growing clearness and carried me far from the old orthodox position.

"In 1902 I came to Conference with my resignation in my pocket, but the urgent advice of the president and others of the senior ministers persuaded me to defer action. I accepted an invitation to become junior minister at Grace Church and for four years devoted myself largely to the practical activities of a large down-town church.

"Ill-health made necessary a year without a station. This gave me an opportunity of getting out of the regular routine and seeing things in a somewhat truer perspective. While in Palestine, I decided that

come what might, I must be true to my convictions of truth. It seemed to me that in the Church I was in a false position. As a minister I was supposed to believe and to teach doctrines which either I had ceased to believe or which expressed very inadequately my real beliefs.

"I carefully prepared a statement of my position and sent it with my resignation to the Conference of 1907. A special committee appointed to confer with me, reported that in their judgment my beliefs were sufficiently in harmony with Methodist standards to make my resignation unnecessary and recommended that it be not accepted. The Conference, without dissent, accepted the recommendation.

"What could I do? Left intellectually free I gratefully accepted the renewed opportunity for service. For six years, as Superintendent of All People's Mission, I threw myself heartily into all kinds of social service work. Encouraged by my own experience, I thought that the Church was awakening to modern needs and was preparing, if slowly, for her new tasks.

"But as the years went by certain disquieting conclusions gradually took form. I began to see that the organized Church had become a great institution with institutional aims and ambitions. With the existence of a number of denominations, this meant keen rivalry. In many cases the interests of the community were made subservient to the interests of the Church. Further, the Church, as many other institutions, was becoming increasingly commercialized. This meant the control of the policies of the Church by men of wealth and in many cases, the temptation for the minister to become a financial agent rather than a moral and spiritual leader. It meant, also, that anything like a radical programme of social reform became in practice almost impossible. In my own particular work among the immigrant peoples I felt that I, at least, could give more effective service outside denominational lines. Intellectual freedom was not sufficient—I must be free to work.

"For three years I acted as secretary of the Canadian Welfare League and for one year as director of the Bureau of Social Research of the Governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Last year, owing to the closing of the Bureau and another breakdown in

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health, I came to British Columbia. At the suggestion of one of the ministers and by courtesy of the B. C. Conference, I was appointed supply on a little coast mission field. Here I have again had the opportunity of trying out church work and learning in still another field how difficult it is to help people through the Church.

In the meantime another factor makes my position increasingly difficult. The war has gone on now for four years. As far back as 1906, I had been led to realize something of the horror and futility and wickedness of war. When the proposals were being made for Canada to assist in the naval defence of the Empire, I spoke and wrote against such a policy. Since the sudden outbreak of war, there has been little opportunity to protest against our nation and empire participating in the war. However as the war has progressed, I have protested against the curtailment of our liberties which is going on under the pressure of military necessity and the passions of war.

"According to my understanding of economics and sociology, the war is the inevitable outcome of the existing social organization with its undemocratic forms of government and competitive system of industry. For me it is ignorance or a closed mind, or camouflage, or hypocrisy to solemnly assert that a murder in Serbia or the invasion of Belgium or the glaring injustices and horrible outrages are the cause of the war.

"Nor through the war, do I see any way out of our difficulties. The devil of militarism cannot be driven out by the power of militarism without the successful nations themselves becoming militarized. Permanent peace can only come through the development of good will. There is no redemptive power in physical force.

"This brings me to the Christian point of view. For me, the teachings and spirit of Jesus are absolutely irreconcilable with the advocacy of war. Christianity may be an impossible idealism, but so long as I hold to it, even so unworthily, I must refuse, as far as may be, to participate in or to influence others to participate in war. When the policy of the State—whether that state be nominally Christian or not—conflicts with my conception of right and wrong, then I must obey God rather than man. As a minister I must proclaim the truth as it is revealed to me. I am not a pro-German, I am not, I think, lacking in patriotism; I trust that I am not a 'slacker'

or a coward. I had thought that as a Christian minister I was a messenger of the Prince of Peace.

"The vast majority of the ministers and other church leaders seem to see things in an altogether different way. The churches have been turned into very effective recruiting agencies. A minister's success appears to be judged by the number of recruits in his church rather than by the number of converts. The position of the Church seems to be summed up in the recent words of a General Conference officer—'We must win the war, nothing else matters.' There is little dependence on spiritual forces. The so-called Prussian morality that might makes right, and that the end justifies the means is preached in its application if not in theory. 'Military necessity' is considered to cover a multitude of sins. Retaliation, specifically repudiated by Jesus, is advocated. Private murder, under certain conditions, is lauded. Pacifism is denounced as a vice. Love is tempered by hatred.

"Holding the convictions I do, what is my duty under such circumstances? The *Christian Guardian*, presumably voicing the thought of the Church, discusses the case in its issue of May 1st

"'And if he be a preacher, we presume that he may feel that it is cowardly to keep silence, and that truth demands that he testify to what he believes to be the truth. Consistency demands that we recognize this fact.

"'But in time of war the State has something at stake, and it rightly refuses to allow peace propaganda to be carried on in its midst. Not only so, but the Church has a duty in the matter, and that is to prevent unpatriotic speeches in her pulpits. And if the minister who is a confirmed pacifist has a right to speak his mind fully, the Church which he serves has a right also to see that he does not use her pulpits nor her authority to damage or defeat the efforts of patriots who are trying to win a righteous war.

"'In every such case the country and the Church have a right to insist not only on the absence of seditious or disloyal speech and action, but also on truest patriotic utterances, and if a man cannot conscientiously declare himself a patriot he has no business in any Church which prides itself upon its patriotism.'

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"Apparently the Church feels that I do not belong, and reluctantly I have been forced to the same conclusion. This decision means a crisis in my life. My associations, my education, my friends, my work, my ambitions have all been connected with the Church. After twenty-two years, it is hard to go out not knowing whether I go. In taking this step, I have no sense of disloyalty to the memory of my honoured father or the upbringing of my widowed mother. On the other hand, I have a growing sense of fellowship with the 'Master', and the goodly company of those who, throughout the ages, have endeavoured to follow the gleam. I still feel the call to service and trust that I may have some share in the work of bringing in the Kingdom."

Twice before, J S Woodsworth had been prepared to resign from the Church, and twice before, the Church had declared that she was broad enough to find room for his views. But this time the Church silently accepted his resignation. There was no longer room for him. This time there could be no turning back.

## CHAPTER X

# ON THE WATERFRONT

FATHER went to Vancouver to look for work. He stayed at a boarding house kept by a distant relative of Mother's people and tramped about from interview to interview, seeking employment of the sort for which his education and training had fitted him. There didn't seem to be room for him anywhere. But the family had to eat. Furthermore, both our parents were determined that we children should all remain at school and get a good education. Some way must be found to earn a living. However, it was a real shock to all of us one August day when Mother read aloud a letter that had just come by the Vancouver boat.

"To-day ought surely to be one of the Red Letter days. For the first time in my life I've done a day's work and earned a day's wages—at least, about a day's. I've made the plunge!

"On Thursday night Dr. Inglis [the Gibson's Landing doctor and I saw Mr. Trotter again and attended a committee meeting of the Labor Party. On Wednesday I interviewed Mr. Kavanagh acting agent of the Longshoremen's Union, who advised me against taking manual work if I could get anything else. I saw the agent of the metal workers and learned that there was little work at the shipyards. Men being laid off. Then I visited the School Registry and found few schools—the best, 50 miles back from Alberni on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Only half a dozen children. Had lunch with Mr. Thomas who spoke of a possible opening in a high school but nothing definite. So little opening in the schools and a very small salary.

Then I went to the Longshoremen's Auxiliary—the organization that handles freight from and to the cars and sheds at the

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longshoremen proper do to and from the ships and sheds. Winch (E. E. Winch, later M. L. A. for Burnaby), the secretary, who is also the president of the Trades and Labor Council, remembered being chairman two years ago at a Forum meeting I addressed. He was quite interested in my story—thought I would be physically able to stand the work, that it would bring me in a living (not a very big one) and would leave me free to get off at any time or to say what I pleased. He said he would be glad to stretch a point and gave me a chance at whatever work he could. Advancement you see, goes by slow degrees. Further, he offered later to take me into his home for a while. His wife and family are away at present. He thought it would be worth while to get me into the movement [the socialist movement].

"So I decided to try it. Trotter [of the Typographical Union], with whom I had tea, thought it was a good move. You remember he advised this at the first. Well, this morning I left Mrs. Nichols' early. Came to this house which is only a few blocks away, and then down to the 'Hall' to wait for a job.

"Perhaps it was fitting that the Longshoremen's Hall is an old church—knox—offices in the vestibules. In the auditorium, tables at which members of the union sit reading or playing cards. Outside, groups of non union men—union is limited—waiting for jobs. As steamers come in, gangs of men are sent for and then sent out according to a certain recognized order of procedure. Finally, my turn came—with another sent over to the Great Northern freight sheds. Off I went with my old hat and bundle of overalls and jacket. Was told off to help unload a freight car—a big shipment of rubber en route for Boston and Chicago. In boxes weighing 150-200 pounds. Boxes badly broken. I had to slip around the corner and buy a pair of gloves, or else, I was warned, bad cuts and blood poisoning.

"Fancy lifting trunks all day long! Fortunately they did not rush the work but it made me sweat just the same. I have a new theory as to why the men describe themselves as working stiff! One of the men, a young fellow, asked a returned soldier to exchange and let him have a truck. The foreman simply swore at and about him as a "dago" but let him make the change. The

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language, which is profane and coarse, does not get any pleasanter as the day goes on. But on the other hand there is a consideration that was unexpected. I didn't do very much talking as I'm afraid my speech would betray my ignorance—which I don't want to be too apparent.

"I held out and the young timekeeper announced 'Time!—8 o'clock tomorrow.' So I go at that rubber again. Wages 65 cents an hour, 8-hour day. I'll have to get a freight book—emblem of [my] new profession! There's no doubt about this being the way to get an insight into labour conditions. But think of you as the wife of a common labourer—a casual labourer at that!—a docker!"

That letter shocked me because I had never thought of my father earning a living by doing manual work. Mentally, I recognized that men in overalls were just as worthy of respect as men in white collars, emotionally it was a shock when my father took off the collar and put on the overalls. His letter makes it apparent that it was something of a shock to him as well. Mother's reaction was in a little note written to him next day which simply said

"I am proud to be your wife and the mother of the children of a docker (when the docker is your own dear self). But oh! I just ache when I think of how your poor back must ache. I am half-expecting to have you home to-night."

But he didn't get home that night nor for a long time. He was too busy putting his 130 pounds of frail strength against the merciless hours of heavy work. These were the days when he really learned how it feels to be a worker, a man of flesh and blood and weariness, up against the grinding necessity of earning every day the means of keeping life in his body and in the bodies of his wife and children. For what? Just in order to keep up the same monotonous, back-breaking job day after day, week after week, year after year until age and infirmity discard him on the scrap heap.

Often desperately tired, he nevertheless managed to stick at his heavy job. Indeed, once the initial shock of finding

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himself at such work was over, once he had become a little accustomed to its physical demands, he began to experience a new sense of exhilaration, of pride that—having given up the work for which he had been trained—he could nonetheless manage to adjust himself to something so different. An article he wrote at that time "Come On In—the Water's Fine!" reflects these feelings and the "strange thrill in being, for better or worse, 'one of us—one of the common people'" Other articles tell of his fellow-longshoremen, gathered from every corner of the globe, and of the dull monotony of their work.

"Back and forward—loaders to pilers—pilers to loaders. Is it any wonder he looks at his watch? Ten-thirty, the morning is half gone, anyway. Back and forward—loaders to pilers—pilers to loaders—loaders to pilers—pilers to loaders. The pile of salmon cases grows slowly—it is twenty cases wide, twelve high, and before night will be twenty deep. Slowly, tier by tier, it grows. Back and forward—loaders to pilers—pilers to loaders—loaders to pilers—pilers to loaders. 'Twenty minutes,' says a fellow-trucker as he passes. He need not say more. Twenty minutes till noon—and freedom."

As he carried on this heavy routine, J. S. Woodsworth thought of the high-sounding phrases he'd so often read in books and heard in speeches—"The beauty of work"—"self respect which comes from a sense of usefulness"—"mysterious bodily pleasure which goes with the deft exercise of bodily powers". The tired longshoremen had other words to describe their workaday feelings. Longshoreman Woodsworth knew it when he wrote

"It is to laugh! . . . Is it any wonder that the worker dreams of a six-hour day—and beyond that of a new social order—when he can live a man's life and do a man's work?" Freedom? Once he had seen in a penitentiary a row of convicts breaking stone, hour after hour, killing time and their own souls. But is the lot of the "free" worker so much better, he wondered.

"Unlike the convict, the free worker can quit his job. Oh, but then his money stops. He has no free lodging and board as has his

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brother, the convict. So, next morning, seven o'clock finds the worker standing in the drizzle outside the Hall, waiting anxiously for a possible job. The [union] secretary appears at the door. The hundred men crowd toward him. One man has had no work for three days, another has a sick wife and must take every job that offers, a third is saving so that he can have a long-deferred operation that may possibly save his sight. "Brown, Jones, Martelli, Tolaki, Eastholm—Evans-Coleman", calls the secretary, and the four men move off to unload the Eastholm at the Evans-Coleman dock, leaving 96 disappointed men standing in the drizzle."

Many times J. S. Woodsworth was one of those disappointed men left standing in the rain and thinking about what it meant to himself and his family. That experience repeated time after time, convinced him that there is little freedom for the individual worker in industry. He saw with his own eyes, felt with his own body, that men are idle for the most part, not because they won't work, but because they can't get work. For the rest of his life he would be on the side of the workers, explaining their position to those who had only read about it, demanding measures to give them a life worthy of free human beings. When he became a member of Parliament, some people failed to understand his impatience with its ritual and ceremony. It came directly from his knowledge of the precarious lives of workers such as he himself had been. Time-consuming tradition, in the face of such need, was a sacrilege to one whose conscience smote him every time he thought of his own interest-filled days compared with their drab existence, and who was determined to do everything possible in one short lifetime to help them gain a better chance to live.

It was the sight of his fellow-workers, patiently standing for hours in the rain, waiting for the jobs they knew were far too scarce to go round, helpless to do anything about it, that had driven into his brain the conviction that

"It is as hopeless for us as individuals to fight a world organization [capitalism] as it would be for a savage armed only with

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bows and arrows to fight an army with modern artillery. Individual action is an anachronism. We must have united action. We must organize. We must control the system that crowds us back and keeps us down. Then and only then will the workers 'get ahead of the game' "

Organize? Yes, but how? J. S. Woodsworth wasn't even a member of the union, which was restricted in numbers. Daily he took his place in the crowd of casual workers who waited for jobs outside the union hall. Now it happened that during the influenza epidemic that winter the union business agent, who lived alone, was stricken. No nurse was available, but my father went and looked after him as best he could. The man was desperately ill and did not recover. But when the union next opened its ranks to new members, J. S. Woodsworth's name was put forward and accepted. A short time before his death he gave me his union button with the red and blue flag of the longshoremen, which he had treasured during the years as his badge of acceptance among his fellow workers. From these days too, he kept his longshoreman's hook, a sickle-like implement used for handling bales of goods.

Another experience gained wide respect for him, even though not one of the other 1,200 longshoremen followed his example. Those were the days of the Russian Revolution. Progressive people the world over were fired with the hope that the oppressed workers of Russia would at length gain freedom from the knout of their masters. The Longshoremen's Union had passed a resolution of sympathy with the revolutionaries. One day my father discovered that he was helping load a boat with munitions to be used against the revolutionaries in Siberia. Without a moment's hesitation he downed his tools and gave up his day's work and pay. The others refused to quit on the ground that if they did, either the Seattle local of the union or the soldiers would be given the job—and the wages for this particular job were good.

Father attended the union meetings but he also urged the

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[ need for political action to supplement economic organization. Following the war, the whole West Coast labour movement was seething with unrest and with hope for immediate social change. The Russian Revolution had aroused keen enthusiasm in the hearts of those who wanted direct and drastic economic action. Were not the socialists at Gibson's Landing constantly predicting that world revolution was a bare three months around the corner? Father refused to be stampeded by such visions and continued on his stubborn course of doing the job immediately to hand. He helped to organize the Federated Labor Party of British Columbia of which Angus MacInnis (then a street railwayman and later M.P. for Vancouver South) was an early secretary. He wrote regular and frequent articles for the B.C. *Federationist*, official organ of the B.C. Federation of Labor. He became a regular speaker at the Sunday night meetings held by the Federal Labor Party in several downtown theatres each week.

From the first he made it clear that the socialism he advocated was not the doctrinaire variety so dear to the hearts of the self-styled "scientific socialists." Rather, it was kin to the socialism of the British Labour Party, a movement which had been fed from religious, ethical, co-operative and Fabian streams. Into his conception of socialism J. S. Woodsworth poured his lofty idealism, his unyielding devotion to principle, and his love for his fellow-men. For him the building of socialism was not the mere following of an economic blueprint, it was, in new form, the building of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Such a socialism must spring from the soil of each locality, be rooted in its traditions and nurtured in its heart, adapt itself to its continually evolving mental and cultural climate. Any effort to import the particular variety of socialism developed in Europe or elsewhere, he felt, would end only in futility and bitterness; Canadians must evolve their own type.

Such thinking was not at all to the liking of the leaders of the Socialist Party of Canada; they regretted "his total lack

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of understanding of scientific socialist principles". But he hadn't escaped from one kind of religious dogma in order to become enmeshed in another. He regarded the teaching of the Socialist Party as narrow and rigid. E. E. Winch, the union secretary who later became a CCF member in the British Columbia Legislature, used to give an illustration of how the "scientific" socialists regarded him. Father had prepared the design for a chart to be used in one of his discussion classes, but when he approached a socialist signwriter of his acquaintance and asked him to enlarge it the man refused because "it was absolutely haywire from the standpoint of socialist economics." Probably that signwriter never learned that his conscientious effort to suppress heresy had failed. My sister Belva, then a high-school student with considerable artistic ability, set to work and did a very creditable job on the chart.

That was after we had moved to Vancouver in 1920. At that time I remember attending the Sunday School that my father had helped to organize for the children of Labour Party people and any others who cared to come. It was a programme that neither church people nor doctrinaire socialists would have approved, probably because it partook of the elements of both Christianity and Socialism. It certainly encouraged mental curiosity on the part of the young folk who attended, and there was never a dull moment during the programme.

"Who Set the Dinner Table?" was the first afternoon's topic. That was an easy question. "Mother" the young folk chorused. "But where did she get the tablecloth?" asked my father. "At the store," someone ventured, only to be asked where it came from before that. Ireland—and a vision of men and women working in green fields drenched with sun and rain. The dishes? A picture of England's Black Country as James Woodsworth remembered it, the workers in the sooty pottery towns helping all our mothers set the dinner table. The knives and forks?—more people working to make it possible.

for us to set our table. We leaned forward eagerly. This was no dull lesson, but a fascinating game in which our knowledge of geography came into its own as we vied with each other for the answers.

By the time we got to the food, the problem had become complicated. Canadian farmers provided a lot, but they needed the help of the railway workers to get it to our table, the help of the millers and bakers to make the flour into bread. And then there was the butcher and the milkman and the man in the grocery store. Someone recalled that pepper came from the Orient, the rice in the pudding from Asia and the currants from somewhere over there too. By the time Mother had finished setting the dinner table she had been helped by men, women and children all over the earth. Thousands of people we had never seen were helping us every day. That was a sobering thought. What about us? Surely the only thing we could do was to look forward to a worth-while job that would help us set the world's dinner table or clothe the world's people or do something else to help with the world's work.

Like explorers on some lofty peak we looked out over a vast expanse, kindling with enthusiasm and longing to be about the business of doing our share. But already the afternoon was over and we went quietly out into the misty twilight. Next Sunday we would go in imagination to the time when production was mainly by hand. "The Age of Homespun." We'd see how primitive industry means a lower standard of living than was possible to-day, but also much greater independence for the workers. From there, on succeeding Sundays, we'd recall the story of the men who invented the new machines run by water and steam and how these great tools of production were owned by a relatively few men who hired the others to work for them. This meant a revolution in their lives, herding them into slum conditions and bringing slavery to the machine for people who had lost their independence with their tools. Then came "The Fight With the Machine", where workers

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fought first to destroy and later to control the new forces that enslaved them, but that could one day set them free

Later on we came to the problem of life in the modern city "Learning to Live Together" We saw how people in close quarters had to concern themselves with sanitation, fire protection, police protection—all sorts of things which curtailed their personal freedom but which were absolutely essential for the safety of everyone under to-day's conditions

He wrote articles on these lessons for the *Federationist*. A few of them survive, but most were seized in a Mounted Police raid on the offices of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council in the period of hysteria following the Winnipeg Strike

The winter of 1918-19 saw Father carrying on his dock work and at the same time steadily enlarging the sphere of his activity and influence. Before long he was to be on the road again, carrying the gospel of a new social order across the country with greater urgency and greater authority than ever before.

Meanwhile Mother and the rest of us had carried on at Gibson's Landing. At the end of the first year, following the resignation from the ministry, we had moved from the parsonage to the doctor's house. Father's financial records for the period June 1 to December 31, 1918 show the entry

"Wages—Aug. 15—Dec. 31	Longshoring	\$491.50
Lucy's teaching		177.00"

To this he appended a marginal note "Thankful still to have head above water." It was Mother's teaching that probably kept the family head clear of the water that year. With Father's employment so uncertain, she had decided that fall to apply for a vacancy in the school at Gibson's Landing. She was well qualified, being a graduate of the University of Toronto and a former high-school teacher of some years' experience. She got the job.

Looking back over it now, I don't know how in the world

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she managed to keep going during those Gibson's Landing years. The eldest of her six children was thirteen years old, the youngest, two. We had a housekeeper who came in by the day, five days a week, and whose wages of \$37 a month and two meals a day ate rather heavily into Mother's \$177 for four months' teaching. Mother had all the planning and supervision of the household to do. In addition she worked out a time-table of chores so that each of the children would share in the work and responsibility according to his or her capacity. Being a boy in our family didn't save you from beds and dishes and vegetable-peeling. Indeed, you sometimes had to do a little more than the girls, who were older and needed more time for their studies.

We had practically no money for clothing, so there was endless mending to be done. I remember waking sometimes in the small hours of the night to see Mother sitting by the kitchen table in the lamplight, patiently patching the boys' worn pants and sweaters. Friends were good about passing along worn clothing. I remember wearing boys' boots with catches, for a time. They came from Mr. Winch - the cast-off boots of his son Harold, later the leader of the Opposition in the B.C. Legislature. I remember, too, scandalizing my sister by a proud recital to the girls at school of a list of those who had given me each article of clothing I wore. The variety was so great as to be intriguing!

Somehow Mother managed to find money to give us music lessons and saw to it that we practised faithfully. She contrived also to get us to Vancouver at intervals to have dentistry done. The family has a grateful memory of a woman dentist who must have had to charge some patients a lot more than she charged us. And in Father's records are numerous notes about little gifts of money that came from sympathizers, some in the local community, some from distant provinces.

Mother was an excellent teacher and her pupils knew it. In my own case, she laid a foundation in French grammar

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which helped me ten years later, when I graduated from university, to win a French Government scholarship. Her thoroughness was a by-word, she was liked and respected by the students. But the storekeeper whose antagonism to my father had not been diminished by his resignation from the church, was determined to take out his frustrated feelings on Mother. He and three of his friends took steps with a view to prevent her from teaching. A school meeting was called and the inspector arrived from Vancouver to investigate. Mother's letter describing the meeting to Father was a mixture of rich humour and sheer enjoyment. She wrote

"But James—that school meeting! The Inspector stayed that night at the McCall's and Mrs. M. told me next day that he kept chuckling at any odd moment that night after the meeting and said it was the richest thing he had ever attended.

"The School was packed and dimly lighted by lanterns. Elizabeth [her sister] and I were there. The Doctor in the chair and Mr. MacDonald [the Principal] secretary, of what was admitted by friend and foe alike to be a most representative gathering. The plaintiffs, Messrs. Winn, Simpson and Martin were present. Mrs. Lockyer absent. The Doctor asked them to bring forward their charges and proofs. Mr. Martin told the badness of you 'against everything British', 'in his own house', etc. He was told the meeting had nothing to do with you but with me. Then with great gusto Mr. Simpson took the floor, as he supposed we were waiting for 'your humble servant'. Told of you 'in holy orders refusing to pray for the boys at the front', etc. He had lost a good many near and dear to him at the front, etc., etc. He was told that it was I who was in question.

"Then Mr. Winn took the floor. He, like the others, had nothing against Mrs. W. personally,—had always admired her, etc., but we very well knew that Mr. W. was socialistic (he didn't mind some kinds of that, he was a socialist himself—and everybody groaned), anti-British, revolutionary, etc., etc., and it was a most serious thing that this teaching should be given to the rising generation, for they all knew that Mrs. W. was in hearty sympathy

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with her husband and hence directly under his influence and lots of such talk.

"Upon this, he was told the same as the others, Mr Burns drawing out 'Then if Mr W is a murderer, Mrs W is a murdererin.'

"Near the beginning I had risen and asked them to kindly state any one sedulous utterance of which I had been guilty, and also where and when. At this point I rose and turned to the Inspector, asking it, as my right in the interest of 'British fair play' that the whole correspondence be read whereupon he read first a telegram signed W Winn. In conjunction with Mr Simpson I strongly protest against a certificate being granted to either Mr or Mrs W. Letters following

"Then followed a letter from each of the four. Just before these were read I said I would like the chairman to ascertain just how many children were concerned among these four and only one could be produced, though, when we came to Mr Simpson's letter he was full of groaning that he would be obliged to cease sending 'my children'. One letter stated that you had been asked to resign from the church and had later done so, etc.

"Of course during the whole evening nobody attempted to lay one specific charge against me—or you either for that matter. Then Mr Chamberlain [Chairman of the School Board] rose to 'get it off his chest', turned round and addressed Mr Winn somewhat as follows: first a long piece about the difficulties the trustees meet with in keeping things running smoothly without somebody adding to it and 'that is what you have been doing in a good many ways in this community—going around making trouble and we think it's time you'd quit'. Then Mr Simpson was called into question as to what right he, a newcomer had [to] butt into our affairs, whereupon Mr S said 'Don't worry, I won't be long with you', and Mr Burns said 'Good-bye, give me a lock of your hair'.

"Here's the boat so to end up—with threats of a lawsuit Mr Simpson apologized fully and Mr Winn gave what he called an apology to me and the meeting ended. The Inspector asked for a showing of those who wished me to teach and practically every hand (but four) was strained frantically upward.

"It was all so jolly."

## CHAPTER XI

# THE WINNIPEG STRIKE

WHEN spring came in 1919 the nightmare of war was over, but peacetime was bringing back the old problems of unemployment, rising living costs, social insecurity, disillusionment. Veterans welcomed home as heroes, war workers praised for untiring effort, women honoured for bravely bearing anxiety and loss, all were trying to adjust themselves to unexpectedly difficult conditions. In particular a great restlessness pervaded the ranks of industrial workers. The men on the Vancouver waterfront, in touch with the ships and crews of the world, were in no mood to be shoved back to their pre-war status as cogs in the industrial machine. The war had opened wide horizons in their minds. The new Russia was a star of hope for the toilers of the earth. They were no longer content to hear about democracy, they wanted to experience it in their daily lives. Yet at this moment of expanding hope, work on the waterfront began to slacken and the men faced once again the bleak prospect of unemployment.

As one of them, J. S. Woodsworth knew all the uncertainty and frustration of waiting for the jobs that got fewer and fewer. Further, he was filled with impatience and eagerness to be at his own job which the war had interrupted, the job of spreading new social ideas across Canada. At this point he received an invitation from Rev. Wilham Ivens of Winnipeg to make a speaking trip across the prairies, its purpose was to educate workers' organizations to the need for social change. The tour would be under the auspices of the Labor Church which Mr. Ivens had founded that year in Winnipeg along earlier British lines.

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My father accepted the invitation with alacrity. The *Western Labor News*, of which Mr. Ivens was the editor, announced his acceptance and his itinerary in the issue of May 9, stating that he would arrive in Winnipeg on June 8. Once again he was on the road, doing the work he felt impelled to do, lecturing on a wide range of topics including his views on war and on the peace settlement, his reasons for leaving the ministry, his conviction that only fundamental economic change could right the wrongs of poverty and injustice. He saw more clearly now that those wanting real change would have to organize along both economic and political lines. His was an appeal for reasoned action taken by constitutional means after democratic decision.

On the train between Prince Rupert and Edmonton he heard the news that on May 15 a strike had broken out in Winnipeg. He had had no previous knowledge of serious developments there, but decided to continue his lecture tour, arriving in Winnipeg as scheduled on June 8. That day he spoke to a meeting called by the Labor Church in Victoria Park, attended by 10,000 workers. From the moment he stepped on the platform and received a tumultuous welcome from the great gathering of workers, it was apparent that he had identified himself with their cause. The preceding speaker was Canon Scott of Quebec City, the padre beloved by the men overseas and the father of Frank Scott, later National Chairman of the CCF. Both speakers encouraged the workers to stand solidly together. J. S. Woodsworth emphasized the need for firmness without force in securing their just demands for better wages and working conditions, he envisaged the day when the workers would own and enjoy the things they produced by hand and brain.

It is not my purpose to make an analysis of the elements that went into the making of the Winnipeg Strike. Such studies have been made and will, no doubt, be followed by others. Nor do I propose to assess the rights and wrongs at

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various stages of the strike. The courts decided against the strikers when they sent their leaders to jail. The people of Winnipeg reversed the decision when they sent the same men to the Legislature and to Parliament. Seldom have men been tried by such a wide jury of their peers. Seldom has the verdict been a mandate to represent their fellow-citizens in the highest courts of the land. Here I wish simply to tell the story of the strike as we saw it from Gibson's Landing, fifteen hundred miles away, through the media of the press, Father's letters and later from the accounts of eye-witnesses whom we met over a period of years.

From the beginning J. S. Woodsworth believed that the strikers were fighting in a just cause. The grievances of two groups of workers had precipitated the trouble. The Building Workers were battling for a living wage which their employers claimed they couldn't afford to pay them. The Machinists in the Metal Trades were fighting for the right to bargain collectively which had been denied them by their employers, the Iron Masters. These two unions appealed to the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council for support. A vote was taken on May 13 when some seventy unions voted to walk out in sympathy. Two days later the strike began, spreading quickly until it involved 30,000 workers in so many kinds of jobs that the city's economic life was practically brought to a standstill.

While the grievances of two groups of workers were the immediate cause of the strike, other far-reaching factors sustained the working people of Winnipeg through six anxious weeks and were responsible for the ultimate verdict at the polls. These causes were detailed in a report remarkable for its cool reason in a period of hysterical excitement, the Royal Commission report made in November, 1919, by H. A. Robson, charged by the Manitoba Government to inquire into the strike. They included growing unemployment, sharply-rising living costs, swollen profits by railroads, packing-plants and other corpora-

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tions, low wages and bad working-conditions, coupled with the refusal of employers to permit collective bargaining or, in some cases, any labour organization whatsoever.

If it was hope of improving their conditions that sustained the strikers and their families, it was fear of having to yield to their demands that prolonged the stubborn refusal of the employers to negotiate with the strikers. The employers were not slow to use every instrument which money and influence could secure to work on the irritations and fears of the general public. The daily press published inflammatory articles and cartoons showing the citizenry of Winnipeg in the grip of bearded Bolsheviks determined to establish a Soviet on the banks of the Red River. They portrayed the strikers as alien revolutionaries bent on destroying every vestige of law and order. A Committee of One Thousand citizens quickly sprang into being to oppose itself to the Strike Committee. The strikers remained quiet, pressing for negotiation of their claims. Public hysteria grew, while both City Hall and Provincial Government remained strangely inactive in the face of mounting tension. J. S. Woodsworth wrote in the *Western Labor News* of June 12:

"The general public is up in arms. They have suffered inconvenience and loss. Why should innocent non-combatants suffer? The general public has not been innocent. It has been guilty of the greatest sin—the sin of indifference. Thousands have suffered through the years under the industrial system. The general public have not realized. It did not touch them. They blame the strikers. Why not blame the employers whose arrogant determination has provoked the strike? Why not, rather, quit the unprofitable business of trying to place blame and attempt to discover and remove causes that have produced the strike and will produce, if not removed, further and more disastrous strikes?"

Two years later he wrote to a cousin some of his impressions of the right and wrongs of the strike:

"That strike has been entirely misrepresented. I know the details

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intimately Without hesitation I say that there was not a single foreigner in a position of leadership, though foreigners were falsely arrested to give colour to this charge. There was absolutely no attempt to set up a Soviet government. The money which was said to be coming from Russia in large quantities was a collection of \$250 raised by some miners in Alberta to bring a lecturer from Winnipeg. It was charged that the attempt was to overturn the government by force, yet not a single gun was discovered from Nova Scotia to Prince Rupert.

In short, it was the biggest hoax that was ever put over any people. Government officials and the press were largely responsible. Of course, some of them were quite sincere, but absolutely hysterical. In the South End where Mother lived, people guarding their houses with rifles against imaginary monsters, while the flesh and blood strikers were—some of them—holding what can best be described as great revival meetings and praying for strength to hold out for another week for what they believed were their rights.

"When I came first, I thought that possibly I might do something to bring about a settlement, but that was impossible. I'm not saying that the strikers did nothing wrong. A strike is a serious weapon. But I do say that the strikers kept their heads far better than the business men."

On May 24 the *Citizen*, organ of the Committee of One Thousand, announced the arrival from Ottawa "in connection with the strike situation", of Hon. Arthur Meighen, Minister of Justice, and Hon. Gideon Robertson, Minister of Labour. On his arrival Mr. Meighen had lost no time in announcing, according to the paper, that "there is absolutely no justification for the general strike called by the Strike Committee in this city".

Nor did the Government lose time in putting two extraordinary pieces of legislation on the statute books. In less than an hour an amendment to the Immigration Act was rushed through both Commons and Senate and given Royal Assent. This amendment permitted the deportation as an undesirable of any immigrant, British or foreign-born, regardless of the

length of time he had lived in Canada, by the Immigration Department and without trial by jury. The other amendment was to the Criminal Code and later became known as Section 98. It reversed the whole tradition of British law, permitting a person to be arrested on suspicion and placing the burden of proving his innocence on the accused.

If anything further had been required to convince my father of the need for defending the cause of the strikers, these two pieces of legislation supplied it. Here was a double body-blow at the freedom of the citizen. Father attacked both pieces of legislation from the moment they were passed, and did not rest until his efforts in the House of Commons and elsewhere had helped to repeal both of them, the Immigration Act amendment in 1927, Section 98 in 1936.

It wasn't long before the purpose of the new legislation was made clear. Early one morning in the fourth week of the strike, the Mounted Police came to the homes of eight of the leaders, arrested them and hurried them off to Stony Mountain Penitentiary. Respected and law-abiding citizens for years, these men were well known in Winnipeg. When it was announced that they were going to be deported without trial, there was such a storm of protest locally and in Great Britain, that the authorities had to abandon their intention. They decided to bring them to trial in Winnipeg.

Among those arrested was William Ivens, editor of the strike bulletin. My father stepped into the breach. He consulted with Fred Dixon, M.L.A., who had been one of his closest friends for years, a man who had thrown himself heart and soul into the cause of the strikers. Father recalled that "Dixon said 'J. S., you act as editor and I'll act as reporter.'" And so, for almost a week, the two of them got out the bulletin. During that week tension mounted unbearably. The public suffered from the lack of many vital services, including deliveries of bread and milk.

On Saturday of that week, June 21, a committee of returned

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men called a parade which swelled into a vast throng of strikers and onlookers. Who took the first provocative action has been hotly debated, but as to the outcome of "Bloody Saturday" there can be no dispute. I have some photographs taken that day, showing police on horseback, charging down the crowded street, swinging hardwood "baseball bats" (horses' neck-yokes sawn in two), and terrorizing all in their path. Indeed, I still have one of the "baseball bats" that was used in this Canadian version of the Peterloo Massacre. Before the parade was finally broken in front of the City Hall where large numbers of soldiers appeared with rifles and machine-guns, a messenger boy had been killed, a man so badly injured that he died later, and a hundred other persons wounded.

Father arranged for the strike bulletin to carry a full report of "Bloody Saturday." There also appeared in the *Western Labor News* of June 23 editorial comment on the police action, accusing those who had ordered the assault of "Kaiserism in Canada." But the editorials cautioned the strikers not to use violence on their side, and urged upon the Government the necessity of immediate action to investigate the strikers' grievances, pointing out that the returned men who were in sympathy with the strikers were becoming restless and in a mood to take things into their own hands.

On June 23 my father was arrested on charges of seditious libel, based on these and other writings. Next day he wrote to Mother from the provincial jail in Winnipeg:

"You have told me that I would not be happy till I got into 'trouble.' Well, yesterday afternoon the *Labor News* was suppressed and I—the supposed editor, arrested—all sorts of charges which I am confident cannot be substantiated, so don't worry. As our old friend used to say, 'Things is looking pretty good for us.' I had a good sleep last night and feel in pretty good shape. Mother, of course, will find this very trying, but Harold (his brother) says she is better this morning.

"They have called me now for the preliminary hearing so I

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must run. With much love to each of the children and kind regards to the Ingles [the doctor's family]."

At Gibson's Landing we had been in a state of suspense for weeks. Mother tells of my five-year-old brother's concern

"Bruce said to me one night at bed-time 'Father might get hurt.' After I had tucked him in, I was standing by the window when he groaned out 'I wish Father had Charles' 22 with him!'"

This same five-year-old, when he learned of Father's arrest, asked Mother with great earnestness

"Was Father put in jail, Mother, just because he spoke a little on the Gov'ment?"

We older ones sensed that his arrest was coming, but the actual event was a shock. In a letter to Father's sister Mary, written on June 30, Mother told how each one of us received the news. Indirectly she revealed her own courage, her concern for others, and above all, her complete readiness to accept the consequences of her husband's fight for social justice. Mother rose to full moral stature during these years at Gibson's Landing. Here is her letter, written a week after Father's arrest:

"I do feel so anxious about Mother [Woodsworth]—indeed I have done so ever since James spoke of going to Winnipeg. I wish it could be given to me to speak some great word of comfort to her, but I fear that cannot be.

"Indeed I fear that my letter may but pain her, and yet she will be relieved to know that I firmly believe that in the true sense of the word, all is well with us . . .

"I really believe that James could do 'no other' than he has done without compromising with truth. What has come to him comes in no sense to me as the unexpected, even though I did feel considerably perturbed when I first learned of the occurrence. You will want to know about that, I suppose . . .

"We knew of the arrest of Mr. Ivens et al. Then on Saturday we saw James' connection with *Labor News*, though I had heard of it on Friday from the School Inspector. After that came the trouble between the R.N.W.M.P. and the mob, and we knew

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that anything might happen. I felt, however, that I wanted to know just as soon as it was known, and asked Mrs. Inglis to send me word any time if anything did happen. On Tuesday I was still in Belva's classroom at noon when she returned from lunch and handed me a note from Mrs. Inglis telling of his arrest. No one else was in the room so I just told her. It was not a new thought to any of them. Her face showed great emotion for a minute—dismay, I should say, and then pity, I think—and then she looked up and said 'Shall I go and tell Grace?' I said she had better not and she came out and joined Grace on the playground as I passed across to the High School building where I taught each afternoon.

"In a moment the bell rang and Grace and Kathleen Inglis happened to run in ahead of the others so I told them. Grace's head rose proudly and she took her seat. It so happened that in the course of an hour Charles was sent for a book to my room and I stepped outside and told him. His face just lighted up with boyish interest. 'Is Father in jail, Mother?' he asked, and when I said 'Yes,' he said, 'I'll tell Belva.' I told him she knew, so off he shot back to his work.

"Ralph was not at school that day as his room was being used for exams, and when I came home he stepped into the little living-room with eyes suffused with tears, to ask what it all meant. Then as we sat at dinner that evening with nobody very keen as to appetite, so strongly was the undercurrent of concern and sympathy for Father in evidence, suddenly Bruce called out cheerfully 'Mother, Father's in jail' Little Helen (Inglis) had told him.

"Oh yes, I taught French, and British and Canadian history and drawing that afternoon until 3 30 and then had an extra lesson with the Entrance Class, yet my thoughts were far away in Winnipeg with you all—with Mother and her boy, my husband—him with the burning passion for social justice.

"I am sure there is no need to go into our position. With James, I have ceased entirely to wish for luxury, ease, comfort or advantage for us, yes, or for our children, while countless thousands never do and never will, under the present system get a chance for

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ordinary, decent living. You see, since James has been a longshoreman, I have seen that those who work with him can never get enough money to clothe and nourish their children and to provide for dentistry, surgery, high school or university education, music, travel, or indeed the delights of a few hours every day of carefree leisure. We like all these things intensely. The only reason we have not been actively engaged in the conflict to help make them general for the human race is that because the others have never had them, it has taken us this long to realize how clear-cut is the issue as to whether or not they shall get them. We have thought that remedial measures would bring in the day. Now we have lost faith entirely in these, and have come to believe intensely that when the people realize it, the competitive system will be replaced by the co-operative.

"Even as I write I hear the boat coming. It may be bringing to me the doom of years of separation from my husband; it may mean to our children a shutting-off or shutting-out of their lives many of the joys in which James and I have found intense enjoyment. I cannot believe it will dwarf their natures if from childhood they realize that whatever in the way of opportunity or privilege is good for them is good also for their fellow-creatures.

"And so, calm in the knowledge that no length of enforced separation can separate hearts that are united, and that the outward and seeming results of our deliberate choice may be far from in accordance with the true inwardness of conditions as the long years may come and go, and that God is true—I await the boat."

Mother knew that in periods of hysteria many things are done which are abhorrent to liberally-minded people at other times. The Immigration Act amendment and Section 98 were fresh proof of that, and now her husband had been taken to jail for his writings. When Mother heard of his arrest, her instant fear was that the next boat might bring the Mounted Police to search his home for evidence to back up the charges of seditious libel. He had books and papers—the classics, works on economics, on socialism. What if the authorities undertook to hold him responsible for the dynamic teachings of

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history? After all, one of the counts against him was a passage he had quoted from the Bible.

She said a word to me, and then Kathleen Inglis and I slipped out of school. We ran down the hill and into the house. We took the old tin bread-box and lined it with oilcloth. Into it we put every book which, in our judgment, could be used to bolster up a charge. We took the ones on socialism, those on war and peace, a few containing vigorous sermons, even some with red covers—if their content were controversial. Then, in the mid-afternoon quiet, we stole away to the woods with our burden. We stepped with caution, careful to break no twig or leave other traces of our passing. Under a great fallen log we buried our bread-box, covering it with the moss and dead leaves we had displaced. With continued watchfulness we regained the house, satisfied that we had not been observed.

We told no one of our afternoon's work, nor did we tell Mother where we had hidden the books. Between the two of us we enjoyed the importance of our secret, referring mysteriously in our own conversation to "S. V.", the letters standing for "secret vault". Father told the end of the tale in a letter to a cousin.

"Five months later, when I got home, Grace, the sole custodian of the secret of the hidden papers said 'Father, I've kept your things safe,' and she proudly led me through the garden, back into the woods, over logs and stumps, till we came to the carefully-concealed cache. A fine, free country, this Canada of ours!"

The bread-box stayed there for some little time after that, until all danger that its contents could be used against Father was a thing of the past.

Following his arrest, my father had remained in the provincial jail in Winnipeg. From the Federated Labor Party in Vancouver came this terse and salty wire: "Congratulations on your martyrdom. Hope you deserved it." Fred Dixon edited the paper until three days later when he also was arrested on a charge of seditious libel. Father took great satisfaction from the

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fact that by this time William Ivens had been released on bail and was back on the job, so that the paper did not miss a single issue. He himself got bail five days after his arrest, bringing out with him as a souvenir of his jail experience the metal spoon with which he ate his meals. Later he was to put it with his first parliamentary paper knife, tying the two together with red ribbon as a visual record of his progress from jail to Parliament.

Meanwhile the strike had collapsed and was officially called off on June 26. Strike funds were running low, public meetings were banned, the strike leaders had been arrested, many workers and their families were on the verge of starvation. On the other hand, the Iron Masters had accepted collective bargaining—at least in principle—and the Manitoba Government had promised a Royal Commission to investigate the causes and course of the strike.

Release on bail for the strike leaders meant throwing themselves into the battle again. A Defence Committee was established to raise the funds necessary for the forthcoming trials and to get the strikers' case before the Canadian public as clearly as possible. Twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of "Workers' Liberty Bonds" were printed in denominations as low as a dollar. The one I bought with great pride was numbered 27720.

Known as the "Big Ten", the strike leaders were all good speakers. They travelled widely across the country. My father's route took him as far west as Victoria and as far east as Montreal. It included forty public meetings as well as unnumerable smaller gatherings and interviews. Before starting out he had addressed a number of meetings in Winnipeg. A letter to Mother dated June 30 gives something of the idealism which inspired not only the leaders but also the great body of the rank-and-file.

"The first [of one evening's meetings] was in Elmwood—in the open air one block outside the city limits. Our church service opened with singing. One Scotchman said these open air meetings reminded him of the Covenanters. Faith of our fathers living still,

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in spite of dungeon, fire and sword.' An elder in the Presbyterian church opened with prayer. Prayed for the cause of justice—that God would bring repentance to the professors. The chairman was a small manufacturer who spoke of this new labour church. I made a plea for the boys who remained in jail. Said people had been praying for a great revival of religion. The revival was here—a passion for justice—a sense of brotherhood—a yearning for a better order—a willingness to serve and sacrifice—a reliance upon the 'God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own'."

## CHAPTER XII

### FROM JAIL TO PARLIAMENT

THE trials of the strike leaders began at the end of 1919 R. B. Russell, secretary of the Railroad Machinists, was tried and found guilty of seditious conspiracy. He was sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. Mother wrote to Father on December 28

"You will be almost upon the date of your trial when this reaches you. We read the verdict in the case of Mr. Russell the morning after Christmas. Was ever a more shamefully iniquitous thing perpetrated in the name of justice? .

"As to your own case, I have no doubt but that it is already decided. But I do think it highly necessary that you should fight to the last gasp just to try to let people see how far we are from freedom. I only wish I could be there to hear you. Never mind if you don't come off with flying colours. It is something to take your stand upon plain, simple truth and stand or fall by it alone. So be of good courage" . . .

Next came the trial of F. J. Dixon. In the *Canadian Historical Review* for June, 1949, K. W. McNaught tells of having had a recent interview with Hon. E. J. McMurray, K.C., who thirty years before had defended the eight strike leaders charged with seditious conspiracy. Knowing him to be an able lawyer, Mr. Dixon tried to get Mr. McMurray to conduct his defence as well, but the lawyer strongly advised Mr. Dixon to undertake his own defence, suggesting material such as the biography of Joseph Howe, passages from John Milton re the freedom of the press, and the records of several English sedition trials. Fred Dixon followed his advice. The result was a sixteen-day battle where the strike leader made such a masterly



*in February*

A. WICKHAMPTON I 645



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defence for freedom of the press that he won his own acquittal and struck a telling blow for freedom of speech in Canada.

In this same interview Mr McMurray told how J. S. Woodsworth had also approached him, suggesting that he too conduct his own defence. But in this case the lawyer strongly advised against such a course, feeling that my father would probably throw away his own case in his zeal to emphasize the conflicting principles on trial. But J. S. Woodsworth was never brought to trial. Immediately following Fred Dixon's brilliant defence, the authorities announced that the charge of "uttering seditious words" which had been added to the others against my father was being dropped. The original charges still stood. On March 13, 1920, J. S. Woodsworth received the following telegram at Edmonton from the Assistant Attorney-General of Manitoba:

"The Crown intends to enter a stay in your case of speaking seditious words. Hence it will not be necessary for you to appear Winnipeg at all unless you are so advised by us."

He never was so advised. The stay of proceedings lasted for the remainder of his life though, in theory at least, he could have been brought to trial at any time.

A five-cent pamphlet published by the Defence Committee, *The King vs. J. S. Woodsworth*, set out the counts against him. Perhaps these counts themselves supply the best explanation of why he was never brought to trial. There were six of them in the original charge, and a note by the Defence Committee explains that numbers 1, 2 and 5 were written, not by J. S. Woodsworth but by F. J. Dixon, also that numbers 5 and 6 had never been printed but were seized in type.

Count 1 was F. J. Dixon's vivid description of "Bloody Saturday." The second vigorous sentence must have been particularly upsetting to the authorities. It read "Apparently the bloody business was carefully planned, for Mayor Gray issued a proclamation in the morning stating that any women taking part in a parade do so at their own risk." Count 2 was

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F. J. Dixon's editorial entitled "Kaiserism in Canada" which accused whoever ordered the police assault on the crowd of acting in the spirit of Kaiser Wilhelm.

Count 3 was, in J. S. Woodsworth's own words, "a conciliatory letter which I wrote on the urgent advice of some of the leading business men in an attempt to bring about a settlement." Entitled "Is There a Way Out?" it read in part

"Members, both of the Strikers' Committee and the Citizens' Committee say 'We must fight to a finish. We cannot afford to yield. If it takes three months, we will see it through,' and both camps raise the roof—or the sky—with applause. But all thoughtful men must think of the terrible cost. Then when one side is brought to its knees what will be done? Some way or another things must be pulled together. After-the-war problems are as serious as war problems.

"Mediators have failed. Possibly something might be done if the principals could only be brought face to face. In spite of the words in the newspapers there are very reasonable men in both camps."

Anything more reasonable than that letter at such a time it would be difficult to imagine.

Count 4 was, according to my father, "the gem of the collection", a quotation "without comment or application, from the book of Isaiah—and credited to Isaiah!" Years later the second of the two selections was to appear on the programme of the memorial service held in Vancouver after his death. Here are the verses

"Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy from judgment, and take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey and that they may rob the fatherless." (Isaiah 10. 1-2)

"And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit, they shall not plant and another eat, for as

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the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isaiah 65 21 22).

Count 5, "Alas! the Poor Alien", was one of those articles seized in type. An indication of its nature can be had from its opening and closing sentences. It began "When is an alien not an alien? Answer when he is a rich man, a scab-herder, or a scab." And it ended "If after a fair trial undesirable aliens are found, let them be deported. Meanwhile, how about deporting the profiteers? Everyone knows they are undesirable."

My father described Count 6 as "a quotation from the Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson", later a minister in the British Cabinet. Entitled "The British Way", it outlined the platform of the British Labour Party, together with Father's comments, including the following "This is the British way, and remember! It is absolutely constitutional!"

Such were the counts upon which the charge of seditious libel was based. It is fairly easy to understand why they were allowed to slip quietly into oblivion. The most outstanding thing about J. S. Woodsworth's attitude during the strike and the period of the trials was his insistence upon a solution by peaceful legal means. He held that on both sides there were reasonable individuals, that a settlement was possible through them, that it was the business of the Government to effect an immediate truce and then to remove the underlying causes of friction and injustice. His was a practical approach to a concrete situation. But he was by no means neutral. Throughout, he made it clear that he was on the side of the strikers. Sitting one day in the courtroom during Fred Dixon's trial, he copied out and sent me the following verses which had appeared in the *Western Labor News*:

"Open by permission of the Strike Committee,  
Oh, what an outrage that an entire city  
Bread and milk and water and entertainment get  
Only by permission of the Soviet!  
Labour run by Rabid Reds, getting very cheeky,

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Too many athen talking Bolshevik.

Let Law and Order be maintained! Uphold the Constitution!

Send a call for volunteers to stop the Revolution!

Such are the ravings of the scab-sheet Citizen,

Conveniently forgetting that for the most of men

Food and clothes and shelter to them and theirs come through

Only by permission of the owning Few.

Bread by permission of the likes of Ed Parnell,

Bacon by permission of Sir Joe Flavelle,

Coal by permission of Nanton the August,

Milk by permission of the Creamery Trust,

Shelter by permission of the Lumber Rings,

Clothing by permission of the Cotton Kings,

Land by permission of the C.P.R. and Peers,

Life by permission of the Profiteers."

"It pretty well hits off the situation," was Father's comment.

What of the other trials? A. A. Heaps, Labour alderman and member of the Upholsterers' Union, undertook his own defence and was acquitted. In 1925 he was elected member of Parliament from North Winnipeg.

John Queen, Labour alderman and advertising manager of the *Western Labor News*, was, like Mr. Heaps, also re-elected to the City Council by an overwhelming majority, following his arrest. Early in April, 1920, he, along with the remaining five strike leaders, was tried, and like them was sentenced to one year in jail. Later he became Mayor of Winnipeg and was also elected to the Legislature.

William Ivens, founder of the Labor Church and editor of the *Western Labor News*, walked out of his cell at the end of his year's imprisonment and took his seat in the Legislature to which he had been elected while in jail. So did George Armstrong, one-time organizer of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and member of the Socialist Party of Canada.

R. J. Johns was down in Montreal during the entire period of the Winnipeg Strike. He was acting as representative of the machinists on the Canadian railroads in negotiations before

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the Railway War Board. He later became a well-known technical high-school teacher in Winnipeg.

Roger Bray was the chairman of the returned soldier strikers, he subsequently went to Vancouver where he later became active in CCF work.

W. A. Pritchard came to Winnipeg during the strike to represent the sympathies of West Coast workers. He was an executive member of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council and a brilliant socialist speaker. Later he also took a leading part in the work of the CCF in British Columbia.

To all these men might be applied in some measure the opinion which J. S. Woodsworth voiced about his own case on the night of December 6, 1921, when he learned that he had been elected to the House of Commons:

"Now my case has been tried by a larger jury and the verdict is one that I may well feel proud of. In fact, when the Meighen Government arrested me, it nominated me for Ottawa."

But in the spring of 1920 there was no Ottawa on Father's horizon as he faced the problem of how to continue with his chosen work and at the same time earn a living. In May and June he undertook a heavy speaking tour to the West Coast and back, for the other men were still in jail and the Defence Committee continued to work in their interests. Laura Jameson, later a CCF member of the British Columbia Legislature, and a close friend of my parents since their earliest years on the Coast, recalls the story of Father's homecoming to Gibson's Landing, as Mother told it, with all her rich appreciation of its irony:

"My eldest son, Charles, was learning to play the violin at the time, making up in gusto what he lacked in repertoire. He doubtless felt that some substitute for a brass band would be in order as the boat docked at the Government wharf. The other members of the family had taken their station with the rest of the Landing whose reception of the Vancouver boat was a daily duty and pleasure; this day, of course, called for a full attendance.

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Everyone knew that Mr Woodsworth had been arrested for sedition, many were familiar with the Strike Committee pamphlet 'The King vs. J. S. Woodsworth.' As the boat drew in to the dock, all heads turned to the sound of music approaching rapidly down the rough planking from the road. It was Charles, violin tucked under his chin, bow sawing purposefully in his best rendition of 'God Save the King.' "

In early July my father became involved in an incident from which he learned much. Following the war some labour leaders had organized the One Big Union in the hope that it might prove the vehicle through which all Canadian workers could achieve their aims. At a Dominion Day picnic in the little mining town of Bienfait, Saskatchewan, an O.B.U. organizer was observed talking to some foreign-born miners, according to the press, he aroused suspicion that he was spreading a propaganda to reduce the production of coal during the ensuing few months. A local "vigilance committee" was formed. They visited him at his hotel, hustled him across the U.S. border, and warned him not to return to Canada. Word of this came to labour leaders in Winnipeg, together with the report that O.B.U. miners had been fired and were to be evicted from their homes on the company's property. My father was asked to accompany an O.B.U. organizer who was sent to investigate the situation. He wrote me a long letter about his adventure.

"We decided to work separately. As it chanced, I helped an old lady off the train at Bienfait and in part diverted the attention of the police on the platform. Then I was fortunate in being directed by a workman to the home of one of our informants. From him I got the general lay-out of the situation and a few names. I immediately visited about 9 p.m.—one of the adjoining mining villages and interviewed the leading men among the Galicians. Had my credentials from the Defence Committee so that he could be sure of me. He gave me information and then took me to the home of one of the dismissed miners.

"We went separately, I following at a distance. They are afraid of being reported. I began to think of myself as Sherlock Holmes,

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following my Galician friend through the mining village. I was fortunate in getting a room at the boarding-house so didn't have to register at the hotel. The O.B.U. organizer told me next day that two men stood all night on guard at the corner. He could see them from his window of the hotel.

"Next day I found at one of the garages one of the miners—eager to help. His partner drove me out to the village that was the scene of the trouble. First we went to an adjoining village with a commercial traveller. Then several provincial police came up.

I fancy they were following me—and wanted to know my business. I refused to give them any information.

"We arrived at the next village and they also arrived. I drove to one of the workmen's homes— a key man. He was out. We left the car and went to a house down the ravine. Here I found another man of whom I was sure and got his information. He introduced me to a Galician worker as 'our man from Winnipeg'. This man undertook to guide me to another man I wanted to see.

"A deep ravine, I found, ran in a big semicircle round the town which was on the plateau above. We took the ravine and in a quarter of an hour were on the other side of the town in a little foreign village. I was soon surrounded by a group of the discharged men and was able to give them the assurance of outside interest and help. Then one of them suggested that we ought not to be seen standing in a group. I had my information anyway and started back. On the road I met my O.B.U. organizer friend who had not been so fortunate in his enquiries but was now safely in the convoy of one of the workers. He had been questioned by the police. Then had slipped unnoticed down the banks of the ravine.

"We hid in the bushes while we exchanged notes. Then I went up to the village and to the office of the manager. Walked in, and gave him my name and asked him to give me his statement of the situation. Of course he would tell the Provincial Police but I didn't care now as I had my information from the men.

"Later I saw the government mining inspector. Then as I was going to the auto, a mounted policeman hove in sight. The Mounties don't like the Provincial Police and apparently work

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independently. The Mountie asked me for my name. I refused to give it—on principle. I didn't think he could force it. Told him to arrest me if he cared to do so. When he found his bluff wouldn't work, he confessed that his was now a most distasteful job. The upshot was that we offered to take him back to town in our car.

"The whole performance struck me much like a moving picture show—We chased back and forward on the stage, just missing each other and no one getting hurt! Incidentally, of course, it was a good thing for me to get the Mountie away from the O.B.U. organizer who was all this time talking to the men in the ravine! The whole country is, as one man put it, 'lousy with policemen and officials.'

"I've seen one of the local editors and two of the preachers—all absolutely lacking in leadership or real knowledge. Really, ours is a weak-kneed race and I'm often inclined to think, a weak-conscience and weak-brained people as well. I think I'll go back to Winnipeg in the morning, as, if anything is done, it should be done quickly."

The *Bienfait* incident underlined for J. S. Woodsworth the necessity for unions strong enough to protect the men from victimization. It drove home even more vigorously the need for a government with some knowledge and understanding of the problems of workers and their families—a government that would have to come out of the ranks of the workers themselves. The *Bienfait* experience bred in him a detestation of company towns and all that they represent in dictatorship over people's lives. And it reinforced his thorough dislike for informers and the police—particularly the Mounted Police whose function appeared too often to consist of intimidating workers who were trying to better their living conditions.

Father came back to the West Coast in September. The family moved from Gibson's Landing to Vancouver where we pooled our collective resources and bought the only house my parents ever owned. Finances were straitened and we painted it ourselves, a solid battleship grey because that was the colour

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that happened to be on sale. We brought our furniture from Winnipeg where it had been in storage since we left, but our household supplies were none too abundant. Mother had been using some of Father's old charts as sheets for the beds at Gibson's and we had become well-accustomed to sleeping between statistics. However, when we observed our new city neighbour craning her neck to look at our washing on the line, we looked too. There in bold lettering was the information

LAST YEAR WE BURIED 500 BABIES

No wonder the neighbour looked startled! Nothing about our establishment looked like a funeral parlour!

British Columbia was holding a provincial election that fall, and my father became a political candidate for the first time. He ran for the Federated Labor Party, along with W. R. Trotter of the Typographical Union and Tom Richardson, a former Labour member of the British House of Commons. They weren't elected, but they managed to get some 7,500 votes apiece in Vancouver on a definitely socialist programme. Father spent the winter doing educational work for the labour movement.

In the spring he was off again to Winnipeg, having been asked to act as secretary of the Labor Church. Each week he conducted six group study classes in industrial history and economics. On Sunday there were large public meetings. From this period dates his little "Grace Before Meat" which our family used for many years and which has become familiar to many people since his death.

"We are thankful for these and all the good things of life. We recognize that they are a part of our common heritage and come to us through the efforts of our brothers and sisters the world over. What we desire for ourselves, we wish for all. To this end, may we take our share in the world's work and the world's struggles."

A clue to Father's hopes for the future may be found in a letter to me dated July 20, 1921

## *J. S. Woodworth*

"What good news from Alberta!—39 Farmers, 4 Labour, 4 Independents and 15 Liberals [in the provincial election which returned the United Farmers of Alberta] Rumour has it that there may be a federal election this fall. It will likely come within six months anyway. I suppose we ought to hang on till then so as to be in the fight. But these days I feel I would be quite content to find a little corner somewhere."

He hung on and was nominated that fall to contest the constituency of Centre Winnipeg on behalf of the Independent Labor Party of Manitoba. The federal election came on December 6, and Father won the seat by a large majority. He and Mother wrote to each other the day after the victory. Their letters write a suitable conclusion to this part of the story. Mother wrote

"So you have been successful and in the very scene of your supposed disgrace two and one-half years ago! This is indeed a strange world. Oddly enough ever since we knew definitely the results, I have one mental picture that refuses to leave me—that of you and Mr. Irvine clad in scanty, clinging tunics [not the military one at all but a sort of shirt-effect to the knee] leaning close together for mutual support as you walk across an area of farmland on your way to the capital with no other living being in sight. [Wm. Irvine was elected Farmer-Labour member for East Calgary.]

"Satisfaction over your win-out is first in my mind, but running a good second is apprehension over your new work with only one fully-committed Labour man as colleague. I do think that that one is a host in himself, however. Am I right?"

Father wrote to Mother

"Wednesday evening—Well, I'm tired—But I must get off a note! I wish I could just step in and see you all. It's been a strenuous fight—thus last five years—hasn't it? but yesterday was a great day of victory! You have the figures—some 3,700 over my next competitor. It was a wonderful sweep—astonished almost everyone. The Labour people are wild with enthusiasm. We received the news at the West End Labour Hall, Dixon getting in the returns and

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calling them to be posted. When some 2,500 had piled up they waited no longer but all started off toward town. Someone picked up a dray—latched themselves to it and placing me in it dragged me in triumph, unging and shouting college-like yells **W O O D S W O R T H**.

"At the Free Press we halted and thousands cheered and cheered themselves hoarse. I had to make a speech. Then on to the Tribune where an orchestra played 'He's a jolly good fellow', and my photo was thrown on a screen across the street. Hundreds tried to shake hands with me. A wildly enthusiastic crowd. Then along Portage to Main to the Market Square. Another speech. Then I made my escape to an auto and was driven out to St. James where another group was waiting, and the same thing gone through with, with additional cheers for Mrs. Woodsworth. Then back to Sargent Avenue to satisfy another group of workers. Then home where the family were waiting to welcome me. I'm glad after all the anxiety Mother has had to have this demonstration of the confidence of such a large number of the citizens of Winnipeg. Of course people who have otherwise said little are quite pleased with the victory.

"Then it's a job to get along the street. You see, the bakers and bread drivers and street-car men—all seem to regard it as something of a personal victory and it is a victory for the people. Hundreds have worked for it for weeks.

"I haven't thought yet of the possibilities but they are great, I know. Here I stand on a platform drafted by myself [the platform adopted by the Independent Labor Party], with a group of good men like Dixon, Bayley, Ivens, Tipping and scores less prominent, and the almost solid backing of all sections of labour, and the good-will of large numbers of middle-class people. It's almost a unique situation.

"The meetings steadily improved last week. A crowded house on Sunday. Over \$100 in regular call and then, on an appeal from Ivens, an additional \$300 for a campaign fund. We'll come out all right, by the way, financially. So there will be no load of debt for the organization to carry. How many things I might tell you! .

"Yes, I must come home for Christmas now! How suddenly the tide seems to have turned! I can leave the Labor Church now with

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things in good shape and everyone enthusiastic, and unless the Government goes 'bust' we have our salary and position with part of the year to carry on educational work. Well, I'll not begin to dream about things to-night as I don't want the wheels in my head to be active before I go to bed! No, I'm not too tired—have come through in very fair shape physically.

"Will likely have a big day on Sunday. I'm to get a car and chase around speaking at four or five branches [of the Independent Labor Party]. You can hardly imagine how excited and enthusiastic these folk are."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FIRST SESSION

WHEN Parliament opened in March, 1922, a new era in Canadian politics had begun. The wartime Union Government had been replaced by a Liberal administration, under the leadership of Mackenzie King who, with one interruption, was to hold sway for more than a quarter of a century. The Conservative ranks, almost as numerous, were headed by Arthur Meighen, able debater and experienced parliamentarian. Up to this point, the situation was as it always had been. Party leaders came and went, but Government and Opposition remained, facing each other across the green carpet down the centre of the House of Commons.

But there was a new and puzzling feature in this post-war Parliament, a bloc of sixty five members calling themselves "Progressives". Farmers or farm representatives, they came mainly from the West, though there were a few from Ontario. They wanted reforms to give the farmers a better deal. Newsmen wondered how they were going to fit in, what they were going to do. Already their arrival had created problems. For example, the seating arrangements of the House made provision for only two parties. The Progressives obviously could not sit on the Government side. They would just have to be added to the end of the Opposition bloc on the left of Mr. Speaker.

Among these Progressives was an intriguing innovation, the first woman member ever to sit in the Canadian Parliament. Agnes Macphail, Ontario schoolteacher, had been elected by the farmers of her district to represent them at Ottawa. She was to prove her worth through long years during which she sponsored many humanitarian causes, first in the House of

### *J. S. Woodsworth*

Commons, later in the Ontario Legislature. Not only the farmers would have cause to be grateful for her tough, fighting qualities, the downtrodden everywhere would find in her a champion.

In the forward surge of farm opinion represented by the Progressives, in the many other changes of the new Parliament, little attention was paid to the two men seated at the extreme end of the Opposition side of the House. One was a handsome man in his mid-thirties, vigorous and with the ready wit of the Celt. The other was nearing fifty, lean and greying, but with a quality of alertness that showed in his sharp glance and quick movements. Hair and beard were neatly trimmed, but his clothing showed the effects of thin years and frugal living. These two men called themselves "Labour" and insisted that they be regarded as a distinct group in Parliament. The younger was William Irvine of East Calgary. His companion, whose seat closer to the Speaker indicated precedence, was J. S. Woodsworth, M.P. for Centre Winnipeg.

Following his election in early December, the new Winnipeg M.P. had left for Vancouver to spend Christmas with the family. A year later he would take us all to Ottawa, but at the moment it was difficult to split the school year for the six of us, ranging from kindergarten to first year university. Besides, my father wanted to learn something about life in Ottawa before taking on all the fresh complications of house-hunting and schools for the family. His Christmas holiday was a mixture of home festivities, meetings of all kinds in Vancouver and nearby centres, and a steady stream of articles to a Winnipeg Labour paper, describing his activities on the Coast, and anticipating the parliamentary session ahead. He addressed meetings in prairie centres as he went east and arrived in Ottawa, eager to get to work.

With him he carried the problems of the thousands of fellow-Canadians he had known over the years—the unemployed longshoremen on the West Coast, the prairie farm women

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longing for modern amenities in their homes, the Winnipeg workers who had struck for the right to organize, the new Canadians from many lands, trying to fit into the country of their adoption, the Nova Scotia miners whose life was so hard and insecure, the old people who faced the end of life alone and penniless, the students filled with idealism which could be turned to the purpose of making a better world. J. S. Woods-worth would never be able to forget these people and his responsibility toward them. He was burning now to voice their problems and their aspirations, to spend himself in working out solutions. Here he was, at last a member of the highest law-making body of the land, ready and eager to use Parliament for his purposes, the purposes for which he felt Parliament should be used.

In the first days he was frustrated by a whole series of ceremonies and social events which had little relation to his conception of the business which Parliament should be doing. To permit this sort of thing to overshadow the urgent needs of the common people seemed to him altogether wrong.

"What strange notions people have about Parliament," he mused in one of his articles. "When we were attending school we had the idea that it existed to make laws for the people, that it was a democratic institution; in fact that it was a very serious affair—its members to be prayed for in the churches. So far it has been a series of foolish formalities and ostentatious display."

His impression of the Opening in the elaborate red Senate Chamber was one of fuss, feathers and formality in which wealth and snobbery mixed alarmingly with law-making. A few evenings later it was the Drawing Room, blue ribbon social event, where those on the favoured list were presented to the Governor-General and his wife. My father explained that a good many of the Progressives didn't go. They hadn't evening dress, and in any case many were disgusted by the idea of such a wasteful show when the needs of the country were waiting. He recognized that these arguments were sound, but nevertheless

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he decided to go. He wanted to see the show and "I happened to have the equipment, purchased in the days when I was young and foolish, or at least younger and more foolish." He went, and his impressions were harsh as he thought of the contrasts in Canadian society even as he had once noted them in Britain.

"Yes, here around me was a stage representation of the structure of our society—the vice-regal throne, its occupant a general, the brilliantly attired officers, the successful business men, the diamonds and silks and bare backs of overfed society women, the young girls with their petty rivalries whose fate it is to have no higher ambition in living than this kind of thing. Imperialism, militarism, capitalism, 'society', 'church', 'government', all inextricably united in a system that gives to the few the places of power, and consigns the many to unrelieved drudgery and impotent longings."

Long years in Parliament never dulled this annual shock of contrast for J. S. Woodsworth. He valued tradition but never as a means of perpetuating gross social inequalities. Each session he protested against using the Opening as Ottawa's main social event, each session his protest was a mixture of indignation and compassion—indignation against existing conditions, compassion for society's forgotten men and women. In the midst of comfortable surroundings he never became comfortable because he was never able to forget the cold and hungry people outside. That was the secret of his never failing spirit—this continual process of identifying himself with the underdog that made him in truth the voice of all who were under-privileged and oppressed. As years went by, it was compassion that became the dominant note, though indignation always remained as the spur to action. Here are a few lines revealing his thoughts during the 1929 Opening festivities as he heard them from his office.

"The light laughter rings through the corridors as I write. I am not a misanthrope, but I cannot keep out of my mind the pictures

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of plain homes, in some of which there is a desperate struggle for mere existence. What is Ottawa to them? In some way, the Government has been too far removed from the people, or was it ever thus? . . . Before me lies a letter from a disheartened Cape Breton miner. 'There are some 2,000 miners around Glace Bay who are getting work from one to two days a week, and I suppose you know what that means—and that, after five months' strike'.

(Music floats up from the Senate Chamber) . . . 'The stomachs of the men, women and children demand prompt attention, and I thought the Government might help.'

"Somehow the music and the miner's letter clash. I like music, but I wish the music would stop. Even my comfortable office is getting on my nerves! Hang it! I don't believe I was meant to be a politician!"

When the House of Commons finally met that first session, it was to reveal a new series of hurdles between J. S. Woods-worth and his work. First there was all the ritual and tradition which had come down from the early days of parliamentary government in England. These things took time and my father was impatient. Then there was the Rule Book, that safeguard of democratic procedure, full of pitfalls for the unwary and opportunities for those who could master its intricacies. Accustomed to the free and easy manners of the public platform, the new M.P. was somewhat overwhelmed by the formidable obstacles which had to be overcome if he were to accomplish what he had set out to do. Taking his readers into his confidence as usual, he wrote in the *Yorkton Press*:

"It has been interesting for me in conversation with some of the Farmer members to note how their enthusiasm is dampened by the actual realities of Parliament. It is much more difficult to be able to accomplish things here than in the freedom of outside life. It strikes me that this is a well-oiled machine, and that one is expected to follow the accustomed grooves—to play the game according to the rules, and that those rules permit of very little individual initiative. Even an old Labour man confided in me that he had found himself helpless, and so he had decided to go in with the Progressives. Only

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as a member of a group did he consider that he could accomplish anything."

But the member for Centre Winnipeg had no intention either of becoming discouraged or of going in with one of the larger groups in the House. He had a job to do and he determined to learn how to use the parliamentary tools to do it. He decided further that he would co-operate with anyone and everyone who had similar objectives. He could count on the solid support of William Irvine who had been elected as a Labour Progressive and who had decided to throw in his lot with the other Labour men. Years ago, as Superintendent of Methodist Missions in Western Canada, Rev James Woodsworth, father of J. S., had brought young Irvine from the Orkney Islands to serve this country as a minister of the gospel. Now he too had become anxious to build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Both Labour members had been invited to sit in the Progressive caucus, but as my father explained later "We refused this because we believe our policy is not identical with that of the farmers, and if we went over with them our hands would be tied." William Irvine wittily described the relationship of the two Labour members to each other in his maiden speech by declaring "Mr Woodsworth is the leader of our group and I am the group." But the two M.P.'s thought of themselves as the advance guard of a big Labour bloc in Parliament, predicting that sizeable reinforcements would come at the next election. Their attitude to the Progressives was very friendly. It did not take them any longer than it took the Prime Minister to discover that the big bloc was not all of one mind. Elected on a rather vague programme of reforms, some of the Progressives were won over easily by Mr King's overtures, believing that the reforms of which he talked were on the verge of accomplishment and required only the impetus of their addition to Government ranks. One by one most of the Progressives went into the Liberal fold and oblivion. There were some, however,

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who were quick to see that it was the two Labour men who incessantly demanded action on the problems of ordinary people in the city and country alike. They saw that these men knew what they wanted and had no intention of being fobbed off by words. J. S. Woodsworth took the initiative in fostering the habit of working together which gradually grew between the two Labour M.P.s and the group of Progressives which came to be known as the Ginger Group.

Six days after Parliament opened, J. S. Woodsworth made his first speech. Maiden speeches are usually innocuous affairs composed of complimentary references to the home constituency and the party leader, together with the expression of modest hopes of being able to serve the local voters worthily in this august body. Such speeches are generously received by the House while the relieved member sinks back into his seat covered with compliments.

With his opening words it became apparent that the member for Centre Winnipeg was not going to follow the time-honoured pattern. Declaring that while "our Labour group in this House is small and inexperienced, we represent an important section of the community and are going to speak for that section in Parliament," he launched into trenchant criticism of Government policy on a number of major national issues, giving in each case his solution for the problem.

Scoring the Government's easy optimism in forecasting better times for Canada through a revival of world trade, he declared that we could scarcely hope to compete successfully with highly industrialized countries like Great Britain and the United States. But we had a market close to hand, the most neglected of all markets, the home market. Canadians everywhere needed goods of various kinds; with unemployment rife, there were plenty of workers available to make them. Here he gave coast-to-coast figures, the first of many such surveys. This habit of basing his case on the bedrock of provable fact was always awkward for those who sought to brush him off as a visionary crank.

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His mind ran along these lines:

Take this matter of employment, now. Men are unemployed to-day because they can't find work, not because they won't work. It's up to the Government to provide jobs for them, or failing jobs, maintenance. There should be unemployment insurance to tide people over between jobs. But why unemployment at all? Because our natural resources have become the monopoly of private individuals and corporations looking for profits rather than to give service to the people.

"It seems to me that the great task of statesmanship in this country in the coming years will be to break down that fence and bring together these great factors: labour, natural resources and the equipment which we already have in such abundance in Canada."

He felt that the time had come for Parliament to adopt a new and positive outlook.

"I submit that this Government exists to provide for the needs of the people, and when it comes to a choice between profits and property rights on one hand, and human welfare on the other, there should be no hesitation whatever in saying that we are going to place the welfare considerations first, and let property rights and financial interests fare as best they may."

It was Parliament's new job, he felt, to see that certain minimum standards were established to ensure proper conditions of life for every man, woman and child in the country. Until this had been done, there should be no further talk of profits and dividends.

The House was paying close attention to this new member who spoke with such authority. Clearly he was not going to follow the accustomed grooves. Why, he talked of the Government's being responsible for finding jobs! There would always be tramps and idlers who wouldn't work even if they had a job! And this scurrilous attack on profits—the just reward of taking risks with hard-earned savings! Why, this new M.P. had actually proposed a capital levy to wipe out the war debt!

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He had justified it by saying "I would like to repeat here the stand that some of us took during the war—that if it is right to conscript men it is right to conscript wealth."

This was all new doctrine and very disturbing. Such a man might well prove dangerous. At all events he was worth watching. The press thought so too as they scribbled notes in the gallery above the Speaker. The Labour M.P. became for thousands of readers a "Red", a "Bolshevik", one who welcomed sweeping changes and opposed time-worn ideas of patriotism. A radical yes, but with something about him vaguely reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets as he stood there denouncing the war profiteers and the holders of community resources. Perhaps it was just the beard. No, there really was something Biblical about the way he had ended his speech—by envisioning beyond the needs of our own country the larger hope of world brotherhood. Well, anyway this wasn't the way a member of Parliament ought to talk, particularly during his first speech! Surely the proper task of the Government was to maintain law and order while private business ran the country. Still, there was no denying that the member for Centre Winnipeg had made an impression that would linger for a long time.

During debate on the Throne Speech, no other business was possible. The day after it concluded, J. S. Woodsworth moved two bills, one to amend the Immigration Act, one to amend the Criminal Code. This was the opening round in his long fight to get rid of the legislation passed so hastily during the Winnipeg Strike. When the bills came up for discussion some days later, the new M.P. had his first taste of how a government can sidestep an issue it doesn't like. Ernest Lapointe, then Minister of Fisheries, said that he favoured the principle of the bills. Indeed he himself had introduced similar legislation the previous session, it had been passed by the House of Commons but blocked by the Senate. He could not agree with certain features of the new proposals, but he suggested that they be

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sent to a special committee for study. No doubt a satisfactory solution could be reached by the committee.

Weeks passed, then months, with no word of progress. Finally, in mid-June, J. S. Woodworth rose in his place and asked about the bill. Four days later the committee reported that the whole Immigration Act needed revision, and that there was no use making piecemeal amendments.

My father immediately recognized a sidetrack, a means of ensuring that there would be no action that session. He objected. Seconded by William Irvine, he moved that the special committee be instructed to make the necessary amendments forthwith. Government members immediately opposed the motion, pointing out tolerantly that laws just weren't made that way. They were supported by Mr. Meighen who had been Minister of Justice when the restrictive legislation was passed during the Winnipeg Strike. The motion was overwhelmingly defeated. But the Winnipeg member had learned much about how the intricacies of the parliamentary machine can frustrate those who work for change. A little later he was to show surprising ability in using the machine himself.

The Winnipeg Strike had left him with strong feelings about Government strong-arm methods in handling labour disputes. Suspecting that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were being used for purposes other than keeping law and order in the wilds, he discovered confirmation of his suspicions in the Estimates which showed that the R.C.M.P. had been used extensively for spying on labour activities. He told the House of the famous Corporal Zaneth, detailed to work among Drumheller miners as an agent provocateur, selling banned literature in an effort to ferret out information from his unsuspecting associates. There were other cases—such as the searching of the home of the Montreal secretary of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union and the seizing of his books.

The House listened with distaste, but members were taken completely unaware when, a week later, the member for Winna-

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peg Centre moved that henceforth the activities of the R.C.M.P. should be confined to "Territories not included in any Province of Canada." A spirited debate arose, involving members of all parties. It became apparent that there were those in Government ranks sympathetic to the motion and that the Prime Minister was aware of difficulty. Mr. King suggested delicately that as there had been a good discussion it would not be necessary to press the motion to a vote. My father thought otherwise. The House divided, 47 for the motion, 108 against it. Although the vote was lost, the press noted the fact that its sponsor had secured the support not only of half the Progressives but also of a dozen Liberals—no mean achievement for a private member and one who, two years earlier, had been arrested on charges of sedition.

For a man who believed that the Mounties should be confined strictly to patrol duty in the unorganized territories of the northwest, it was a constant source of irritation to run across one of them every time he went into the Parliamentary Library to borrow a book. Everywhere else in the Parliament Buildings the regular protective officers were on duty, their sober dark uniforms relieved only by shining buttons. Here alone was one of the colourful riders of the plains, complete with wide-brimmed hat, scarlet tunic, riding breeches and boots, clinking spurs and even a riding crop.

One day J. S. Woodsworth questioned the Minister of Justice why this should be, and Mr. Lapointe promised to inquire. M. J. Coldwell, who heard the story later, recalls that a few days after his question J. S. Woodsworth was stopped in the corridor by Mr. Lapointe who urged him not to press for a public answer. It seems that the Minister's inquiry had revealed the fact that on the morning after the fire in the Parliament Buildings in 1916 a Mounted Policeman had been placed on guard outside the Parliamentary Library in order to prevent possible looting. No one, it appears, had ever countermanded

the order—with the result that ten years later a Mountie was still doing patrol duty outside the Library door!

Gradually the two Labour members learned how to use the rules to get discussion on matters which they considered important. At the end of March, Bill Irvine started a debate on the long-drawn-out dispute between the Nova Scotia coal miners and the Branch Empire Steel Corporation. At the beginning of the year when the company cut wages by more than a third, the miners resisted. A conciliation board with an Ontario chairman made an award reducing the wage cut from 37½% to 32½%. The company was satisfied, but the men "struck on the job", that is, they decided to cut down on their output. Twelve thousand miners and their families, said the member for East Calgary, are suffering great hardship and "we understand, both from the organized labour movement of that province, and from the delegation which is at present in the city of Ottawa to meet the Government . . . that the men have about reached the limit of their endurance, and must, of necessity, secure a settlement of some kind at the very earliest possible moment."

The House sat bolt upright in indignation. M.P.s from the West meddling with affairs that did not concern them! The impudence of it! The Liberal member for Cape Breton explained with dignity that he himself had introduced the miners' delegation to the Government who did not see fit to go further into the matter. He wanted either Ottawa or Nova Scotia to do something, but in introducing the miners' delegation to the Federal Government he felt that he had done his duty. The House approved. This was the sort of language the members understood. As the Cape Breton member had observed, if the miners would give "a fair day's work for the wages they were receiving", the provincial Minister of Mines had told them they could apply for a board. A number of other M.P.s spoke in the debate, including the Minister of

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Labour who defended the Government's decision to do nothing.

J. S. Woodsworth sprang to his feet with a denunciation of a situation where a company could, in effect, point a gun at the heads of its employees and threaten "Take this job or starve", a company so powerful that it "apparently has got the province by the throat". There had been talk of the danger of interfering with the rights of a provincial government. Well, during the Winnipeg Strike the Federal Government had not hesitated to come into provincial territory. Here in Nova Scotia was a case where Ottawa must act at once to prevent serious trouble.

The discussion drew into it a number of Progressives including Henry Spencer and F. J. Garland from Alberta, as well as Agnes Macphail. It was a novel experience for the House to hear farm people pleading for miners and their families half a continent away. The press was busy overhead making a good news story for the public. The Government hadn't counted on all this fuss about a strike buried away down in Cape Breton . . . Perhaps something should be done about it . . . Finally the Prime Minister spoke and then the Minister of Finance who announced that the Government had changed its mind. It would take action at once by asking the Board to go to Cape Breton and conduct an on-the-spot investigation.

This debate had a number of important consequences. It showed that the two Labour members had the will and the ability to bring before the House matters of concern to workers and their families, and to make such a stir that the Government had to take notice. It established the fact that these men wanted action and could not be put off by words. It was a clear demonstration of basic sympathy between the outlook of the Labour members and some of the Progressives. My father was not slow to appreciate the possibilities of such co-operation nor to act skilfully to promote it. Further, he spent the Easter recess in Cape Breton with the miners, addressing audiences large and small, learning the conditions in which they lived, driving home

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to them the need for more Labour M P's to voice the case of working people. It was no accident that sixteen years later the Cape Breton miners—District 26 of the United Mineworkers of America—became the first labour union to affiliate with the CCF.

One of J. S. Woodsworth's major concerns that first session, as always, was to oppose any and all attempts to build military forces in Canada. Early in the session he moved a bill to repeal the Military Service Act, but was informed by the Government that it had lapsed automatically at the end of the war. He opposed the establishment of a Department of National Defence, holding that the only way to avoid war was not to prepare for it.

He spoke for the reduction of every military estimate that came up for discussion, including money for cadet training in the schools. In this he had the firm backing of Agnes Macphail. Once another member tried to belittle her efforts by pointing out that, as she had no children, she was completely unqualified to speak on the matter. He had several and hence knew something about it. My father remarked that by the same logic the fact that he had six children should qualify him still better than the man who doubted Miss Macphail's fitness to express an opinion. Needless to say, all attempts to reduce defence expenditures were unavailing.

In those early sessions there was no time limit either for members' speeches or the length of the day's sitting. It was quite usual for the House to sit till one or two o'clock in the morning, and on several occasions Father came home to breakfast from a session that had lasted all night. The breadth of his interests was prodigious, and he did careful research before dealing with any question. He used sometimes to say "I have only one speech"—meaning that all his speeches were but facets of the great social purpose to which he was dedicated—but the

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variety of the facets and his ability to give them sparkle and value never failed to amaze those who followed his work. His energy seemed inexhaustible. Whether it was underpaid coolie labour on West Coast steamships or low paid groups of Civil Servants at Ottawa, once the matter was drawn to his attention he was on his feet in the House demanding action to bring justice to the human beings concerned. The Conscience of the House of Commons, they came to call him, and the name fitted.

Somehow he was able to move others to action by his own example. When he returned to Ottawa from his Cape Breton visit he described the plight of the miners and their families. Of their own accord a number of Ottawa people, some socially prominent, formed a relief committee which sent clothing to the miners. Many of these people had little sympathy with the ideas of J. S. Woodsworth, yet they were moved by his story of human distress and his own concern about it. Having once worked "on his side", they never forgot the man who had widened their horizons. This was true of everyone, whether he were a miner, an Ottawa business man, or a member of any party in Parliament.

That first session was crowded, but at last even the long June days came to an end and Parliament was prorogued. The member for Winnipeg Centre could look back over a record of solid achievement. He had established himself as a coming parliamentarian able to command and hold the attention of the House as few others could do. Already he had earned the respect of the Government who had learned that he could be neither flattered nor fooled and that until he got what he wanted he would just keep on demanding it persistently. He had established the fact that there actually was a Labour group in the House. He had shown increasing ability to secure the co-operation of farm representatives in the House and the support of wide sections of the public outside. Coming years were to prove that no man who ever entered the House of Commons

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knew better how to use Parliament for his purpose than did J. S. Woodsworth.

It is doubtful if he spent much time thinking about these achievements—except how they could be used for the next step. In *Maclean's Magazine* for April 1 of that year (1922) he had written

"Three main groups are emerging in Canadian political life: the business-professional group that has so largely dominated the thought and policies of the country; secondly the Farmer group which has long occupied an important place in the life of the country but which has only recently come into prominence with its own distinctive consciousness and ideals; and thirdly, the Labour group. It is highly desirable in the public interest that these three groups should at least come to understand one another's viewpoint."

The CCF was still ten years away, but already J. S. Woodsworth had reached it in his thinking. That he did not envisage the future in all its aspects is clear from this little quotation from an article he wrote in May of that year:

"Sometimes I am asked how I like the life within the walls of Parliament. All that I can say is that at present it is very interesting, but I cannot imagine that I would like to spend my life here. As, however, this contingency is not at all probable, I need not worry about it."

Twenty years later, at the time of his death, J. S. Woodsworth was still the undefeated member of Parliament for the same district of Winnipeg.

## CHANGING CANADA'S CONSTITUTION

ONCE the House of Commons got over the first impact of J. S. Woodsworth's ideas, once the members realized that henceforth there would be no escape from his assaults on their conscience, they began to look more closely at the man before them. To their surprise they found him warmly interested in them as human beings. He loved people and knew how to strip them of beliefs he considered archaic, and reclothe them—at least for the moment, in more modern attire. "Everyone's a socialist while he's talking to J. S.," remarked one of his friends. A French-speaking M. P., bewildered by being thus separated from his mental clothing during a pleasant chat in the lobby, said in a puzzled way "Mr. Woodsworth, you are such a friendly man here outside, yet in the House you shake the fist at me!" This man came to realize—as did so many others, that the friendship was for him as a man and not for his ideas.

From the moment of his arrival at Ottawa he made friends on this basis. The longer he stayed the wider grew his circle until finally it included almost everyone, members of all parties, the charwomen whom he met around the halls as they left after their night's cleaning, Civil Servants of every rank, the Prime Minister, the protective staff in their trim uniforms. He knew them all and stopped to chat with them as he went about his work. Their attitude to him was a mixture of affection and great respect.

An Ontario friend relates an incident of the early depression years when Parliament Hill was besieged by people in dire straits who tried to catch the eye and ear of someone who could help. The guards grew accustomed to fending off the press of

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humanity who cluttered the buildings and embarrassed the members. Pretty close to the headline himself, our friend drove a battered, noisy car as he went about helping the unemployed to organize. Seeing my father on his way to the buildings one day, he offered him a lift. As they lingered in conversation outside the main entrance, a protective officer strode up to the car and in vigorous language indicated that that was no place to park. Our friend tried to explain, but the official warmed to his subject, no doubt comparing the wreck before him with the sleek limousines which usually drew up at that entrance. Father opened his door and was getting out when the guard quickly stepped to his side of the car, his tone changing to one of warm friendliness. "Good afternoon, Mr Woodsworth. Sorry I didn't notice it was you." And to his companion. "Park your car right over here, sir. I didn't see that you had Mr Woodsworth with you."

Among members of Parliament he took a special interest in those who showed independence in their outlook. He discovered many in the old parties who had sympathy for some of his ideas. This was particularly true of several French-speaking members from Quebec who shared his fear lest the British connection might drag Canada into war. He had many earnest conversations with Henri Bourassa, the Quebec nationalist who wanted to see Canada entirely on her own. Once when they had been discussing their views on various questions, M. Bourassa remarked with a twinkle in his eye. "Mr Woodsworth, it is too bad you are not a Catholic, because if you were, you would be such a good Catholic!" The two men admired each other's sincerity, and while poles apart in their general philosophy, they widened their areas of agreement by talks over the years. It was the same with many others.

Like the rest of the press, the Quebec newspapers readily adopted the habit of labelling the member for Winnipeg Centre a Communist, even while quoting his speeches which dis-

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proved the label. Here are a few lines translated from an early impression of him written by "Claude" in *La Presse* of Montreal:

"In the corridors of Parliament one may encounter at any hour of the day a little, thin man carrying a file bulging with papers under his left arm, who glides rather than walks over the marble floor-stones and who throws over you in passing, like a tender reproach, the gentle glance of his brown eyes. A very neat coat whose cut vaguely recalls the habit of a Protestant pastor covers his anatomic body without hiding the jut of the bones which seem, at the shoulders, ready to pierce the cloth. The first impression is that one has come across some ruined gentleman who has kept from his former splendour the care for his appearance and the taste for clean linen . . .

The first guard in gold-braided uniform will give you information about this strange being who silently walks in ascetic leanness under the Gothic vaults of Parliament. He may even assume the emphatic tone of a circus director as he presents to you as a phenomenon Mr J. S. Woodsworth, ex-Methodist minister, ex-longshortman, ex-prisoner of the Winnipeg jail, today independent Labour member of the House of Commons. To-day Mr Woodsworth pursues his propaganda in Parliament where he claims for his communist and humanitarian ideas a place in our statutes. He is an apostle rather than the leader of a group; he prefers preaching to fighting and appears sincere when he claims he is not a red Bolshevik. He would simply appear what the Americans call a 'pink' socialist, a moderate, the equivalent of a Berlin Social Democrat."

As this description reveals, the member for Winnipeg Centre was indeed a puzzling phenomenon to many of his associates and observers. Over the years, however, closer acquaintance enabled them to sort out their impressions and to gain a clearer idea of what he was and what he hoped to achieve.

Next to his hard-hitting speeches, his prodigious activity and his warm friendliness, members became aware that his horizons were very broad. "Canada" for him included everything and everyone between the two oceans. He believed it was Parlia-

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ment's responsibility to legislate intelligently on every problem affecting Canadians and their relations with the rest of the world. To his surprise, he discovered that the Canadian Parliament had not the power to carry out this responsibility. To do so would require amendment of Canada's Constitution, the British North America Act, but power to amend that Act rested solely with the British Parliament.

As a Canadian and a democrat, J. S. Woodsworth was profoundly shocked by this state of affairs. Why should this country leave the control of her constitution in the hands of another country? That wasn't responsible government! Surely Canada was something more than a British Colony! When he began talking about it with members of other parties in the lobbies, he made a further disturbing discovery: most of them seemed quite content to keep things the way they were, indeed many became alarmed and indignant at the very suggestion that Canada should seek to control her own Constitution.

The Winnipeg member examined this curious state of mind. He discovered that there were various groups opposed to any change. There were Ontario Tories who claimed that it would weaken the ties with the Motherland. There were French-speaking members from Quebec, mistrustful of the British connection, but even more fearful lest the change would harm their minority safeguards. There were local politicians in every province alarmed for their provincial prestige. There were big business interests afraid that change would interfere with their control of industry and labour conditions. The objectors came from many quarters but their objections all boiled down to the same thing, distrust of their fellow-Canadians.

As he discussed the matter with other members, as he watched the Prime Minister and others nimbly dodging behind the B.N.A. Act at the first hint of needed action to improve social conditions, J. S. Woodsworth came to see the B.N.A. Act, not as the time-honoured foundation stone of responsible government in Canada, but as a formidable stumbling-block to future

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progress. By 1924 he had become convinced that an imperative first step to modern legislation was to get the British North America Act on the Canadian side of the Atlantic Ocean. This would bring the battle close enough so that the real opponents to social change could be recognized and overcome. He was convinced that these opponents were not resident in Britain. They lived right here in Canada and they were holding up this country's development from colony to nation.

On March 20, 1924, J. S. Woodsworth moved in Parliament

"That, in the opinion of this House, the governing powers of Canada as constituted by the British North America Act as amended and altered from time to time hereafter, ought to possess under the British Crown the same powers with regard to Canada, its affairs and its people as the Parliament of Great Britain possesses in regard to Great Britain, its affairs and its people."

If there were those in the House that day who had come to scoff at a visionary rattle-brain in the role of a constitutional lawyer, they were quickly disappointed. The Labour member made skilful use of every argument favourable to the change, avoiding the legal pitfalls so dangerous on this subject. His resolution, he explained, simply meant that Canada should regard herself as grown up and prepared for the fullest measure of home rule. The British people had complete self-government, why should Canadians remain under the handicap of inferior status? Why should labour and social welfare measures be blocked because Parliament had no power to implement them constitutionally? In foreign affairs why should Canada remain tied to British policy with all the risks of war that such a position entailed?

He knew that through the years we had made some progress toward independence, if not formally, at least in practice; now it was time to make our status clear. South Africa and Australia had complete autonomy in their internal affairs; why not Canada? Britain herself had advanced a long way since the B.N.A. Act was put on the statute books. Why should we

have to take our lead from the Britain of the past? Conditions in Canada were vastly different, too " if we want to fix an automobile, why should we be forced to go back to the old ox-cart in order to get our models and our tools? The old-time legislation and the old-time constitutional provisions are quite inadequate to meet the needs of the present situation "

With moderation and careful reasoning the Labour member anticipated the arguments of constitutional lawyers jealous to guard the *status quo*, of members from French-speaking Quebec, fearful of losing the protection of the British Crown, of unyielding imperialists from Toronto unaware of the demise of Queen Victoria. But he had not finished speaking before the barrage of opposition opened fire. Would he curtail the powers of the provincial governments? Would he abolish the provincial legislatures? Would he give each province its own constitution? What definite amendments to the BNA Act would he propose? Why should he seek to change the regular procedure of amendment? Britain had never yet refused a change for which Canada had asked. Better let well enough alone.

A Maritime Conservative moved a six months' host for the motion, but the Speaker declared him out of order. A Quebec Liberal moved that Canada make no amendment to the BNA Act without the consent of the majority of the provinces, which majority must include all four original parties to Confederation—Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Ernest Lapointe, newly appointed Minister of Justice, supported this viewpoint. But he realized that to place four provinces in a special category would surely cause discord among the others. The only alternative would be to have the unanimous consent of all the provinces. Meanwhile we were not suffering. The mover had better withdraw the motion and allow time for consideration.

Debate went on for a long time, involving the Prime Minister, the leader of the Opposition and many others. But the Government's stand had been made clear by M. Lapointe and

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no amount of argument would alter it. W. C. Good, Ontario Progressive, put the matter in a neat nutshell when he said "Evidently the objection that exists in the minds of many as to this proposal is the fear that Canada will not protect provincial rights as well as Great Britain." M. Lapointe had observed that "the position we are in is of our making," and Mr. Meighen summed up the general feeling by saying that "when the parties to the contract in Canada are prepared to give up that extra security, when minorities and majorities are agreed to ask that we here in Canada be permitted, under any conditions which we shall suggest to amend our constitution, then we shall not have any longer to wait." That day was still far in the future. Evidently nothing further was to be gained at the moment. J. S. Woodsworth withdrew his motion.

A few days later the *Montreal Star* ran a cartoon to underline the utter futility of the crackpot from Winnipeg. From a massive foundation stone rose the base of a majestic column against a background of maple leaves. On the stone were carved the words "British North America Act", and on the soaring column "Canadian Freedom, Independence and Autonomy". Viciously blunting his tiny proboscis against the great rock was an insect labelled "Woodsworth". Above the scene were the words "Buzz-z-z! Down with Everything!" and beneath "Still seeing red, or the Attack on the Foundation Stone".

People glanced at the drawing, smiled at the insect's stupidity, and the stand-patters relaxed, confident that they had heard the last of the matter. They would have been amazed could they have foreseen that one day the Prime Minister, a Canadian of French origin from the province of Quebec, would rise in the House of Commons to introduce a measure praying the King to give Canada power to amend her own constitution in many vital respects. Between the scornful cartoon and the petitioning Prime Minister was a quarter of a century during which the weight of events and the persistence of the "insect" played their

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part in wearing away the barrier to progress. Perhaps no single issue gives a better idea of J. S. Woodsworth's persistence in the face of apparently solid opposition than this one.

In the 1925 session he was back at it again. A Toronto Conservative had moved to give the Dominion Parliament power to change the B.N.A. Act but not to "pass any amendment affecting the rights guaranteed in said Act to minorities." The proposed law for changing the Act must be passed by an absolute majority in both Commons and Senate.

My father was very eager to see a start on the difficult process of change. He realized that the Toronto member's motion would never get past the protagonists of provincial rights. Further, he had been impressed by M. Lapointe's assertion that the contract theory of Confederation was the only tenable one. So now he proposed an amendment to the Toronto member's motion to make it necessary for the Canadian Parliament to have the unanimous consent of the provinces before any change could be made in the B.N.A. Act. Any hope of passing even this ironclad amendment vanished when the Minister of Justice firmly declared that Parliament could not even ask for the right of amendment without first having obtained the consent of all provinces to make such a request. So motion and amendment were withdrawn.

Two years passed. In the 1927 session J. S. Woodsworth made a new approach. He proposed a special committee to consider amendments to the British North America Act "which, while conserving the principles of Confederation, would enable us more adequately to cope with the complicated problems which now confront Canada." The House debated the resolution all afternoon. Then it dropped to the bottom of the Order Paper and was buried for the rest of the session.

In 1931 Mr. Bennett, now Prime Minister, was attempting to blast his way into the markets of the world while the depression blasted the lives of Canadians at home. Sweeping powers

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of legislation were necessary to prevent further misery and deterioration. So J. S. Woodsworth tried again. He moved

"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that Canada should have the right to amend her own constitution, but that in proceeding to make any amendment, scrupulous care should be taken to safeguard the rights of minorities."

Surveying once again the economic and social needs that demanded attention, he declared that insistence on keeping the status quo was wrong and impossible, that "if our forefathers had brains enough to devise a constitution to meet the needs of their day, we should have enough brains to revise it to meet the needs of our day," exclaiming in exasperation "If we are not impotent, let us be the fathers of something!"

A close examination of the contract theory of Confederation had convinced him that he had been wrong about it. He cited precedents to show that it had been successfully challenged in the past. The Canadian Parliament had passed at least nine acts changing the financial basis of Confederation, without consulting the provinces. His list of those who had helped him prepare his case was impressive. John S. Ewart, Ottawa lawyer and recognized constitutional authority, John W. Diefenbaker, editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*, Grant Dexter, Ottawa journalist who would one day succeed Mr. Diefenbaker, Norman McL. Rogers, later Minister of Labour, Brooke Claxton, future Minister of National Defence, F. R. Scott, professor of constitutional law at McGill University, Eugene Forsey, professor of economics at McGill and later research director for the Canadian Congress of Labour, R. K. Furlayson, Winnipeg lawyer and adviser to R. B. Bennett.

J. S. Woodsworth proposed that the statute empowering Canada to amend the British North America Act should set forth clearly in a preamble certain things that would remain inviolate—the minority religious, educational and language rights to be included. He urged the calling of a constitutional conference where provincial and federal governments could discuss

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these matters face to face. It is significant that in 1949 when Prime Minister St. Laurent introduced his bill asking the British Parliament to empower Canada to amend her Constitution, the measure incorporated exactly the type of minority safeguards which my father had proposed eighteen years earlier.

But in 1931 he met the same objections to the change that he had encountered every time he had introduced the subject of B.N.A. Act amendment. Now it was a Conservative Government which barred the way, but the barrier seemed just as forbidding. This was the session when Prime Minister Bennett moved the acceptance of the Statute of Westminster, but he moved too that "nothing in this Act shall be deemed to apply to the repeal, amendment or alteration" of the British North America Act. After a whole evening's debate on his motion, J. S. Woodsworth was forced to withdraw it, but before he did so he could not resist a touch of wry humour. In ironic vein he produced a resolution which he had composed "in a rather frivolous mood" but which he felt about expressed the limit to which the House was prepared to go in meeting Canada's constitutional problems.

"Whereas the tide of new and disturbing ideas is removing ancient landmarks, encroaching on hoary tradition, subverting archaic institutions, embarrassing routine administration and threatening established political equilibrium,

"Therefore resolved that in the opinion of this House, the Government, after having obtained the consent of each and all of the provinces, should consider the advisability of hanging a suitably-framed copy of the British North America Act in every schoolroom in Canada."

Following this humorously despairing footnote, discussion on the British North America Act slipped once more into limbo.

Three more years went by, tremendous years, in which the tumult of the depression made great changes in people's thinking. Father made one more effort to get something done about the

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**B.N.A. Act** This time he proposed a parliamentary committee to find some method of amendment which would preserve minority rights and at the same time give the Federal Government power to deal effectively with the complicated new conditions. Overlapping between the work of federal and provincial governments was causing inefficiency and waste. The financial arrangements between Dominion and provinces were unsatisfactory. Canada, a group of pioneer settlements at Confederation, had now become an intricate industrial network. We must have more uniformity in social and labour legislation across the country than was possible without the amendment of the British North America Act. This time the House agreed to let J. S. Woodsworth's motion pass, a victory nullified by the fact that nothing was done to implement it. But when the Rowell-Sirois Report was tabled a few years later, it confirmed the facts of economic and financial life which the Labour member for Winnipeg had laid before a House unprepared to do anything about them.

In 1937 it was M. J. Coldwell who put forward a CCF motion for a special committee to recommend specific amendments to the B.N.A. Act. J. S. Woodsworth spoke in support of the motion which, after some debate, was lost. But a few days later Prime Minister King announced the appointment of a Royal Commission to study taxation and the division of financial powers and responsibilities between the Dominion and the provinces. This was the famous Rowell-Sirois Commission whose report in 1940 brought ample evidence that constitutional changes were long overdue.

But now the Second World War was bringing issues which diverted the nation's energies into other channels. Nearly ten more years would pass before Canada started to take her Constitution in hand, years in which war problems would place further strain on the old-fashioned British North America Act. In 1941 the provincial premiers came together in an effort to iron out some of the worst difficulties. But long years of rugged

individualism had been too much for some of them, the conference broke up in hostility before anything had been accomplished. However, the habit of consultation among provincial officials in various departments, the practice of federal-provincial government co-operation in many fields, the almost continuous discussion of problems arising from divided jurisdiction, above all the pressure of economic change—these things were steadily preparing Canada for coming of age.

J. S. Woodsworth did not live to see it, but one day in October, 1949, Prime Minister St. Laurent rose in his place in the House of Commons and moved an address to the King, praying for an Act of Amendment giving Canada the right to amend the British North America Act except where subjects are exclusively within provincial jurisdiction, or in the case of matters dealing with schools or the use of the English and French languages. Parliament accepted the measure unanimously and the British Parliament granted it forthwith. Canada had at last taken the power to change her Constitution, had become mistress in her own house. Seven years after his death, J. S. Woodsworth had won his point.

## HOW OLD AGE PENSIONS WERE WON

**I**N those early years J. S. Woodsworth may have seemed a voice crying in the parliamentary wilderness, but he was always a voice that commanded attention. His influence in the lobbies and on the public was far greater than any recorded vote would indicate. By the middle twenties he had made himself what Professor F. H. Underhill describes as "the chief private member of Parliament."

However, few people knew that Prime Minister King once tried to secure him as a member of his Cabinet—and failed. Few people knew, for Mr. King seldom let his right hand know what his left was doing, on his side Mr. Woodsworth saw no particular reason to talk about it. But he mentioned the offer and its rejection quite casually in a letter to the *Border Cities Star*, dated July 6, 1932. It was just before the birth of the CCF, and the Winnipeg member prophesied "that one of these days the Labour Farmer groups will prove to be the nucleus of a party that will drive the Liberals and Conservatives into an alliance to defend the interests of the financial oligarchy that now rules Canada." He declared that he himself had no intention of joining forces with the Liberals because

"As a matter of fact I am firmly convinced that I can make greater progress as an Independent Labour member than I could as a member of a Liberal Cabinet. That was my position some years ago when there was a Liberal Cabinet and I had the opportunity of being a member of it."

The story of Mr. King's offer of a Cabinet position to J. S. Woodsworth is part of the story of how old age pensions came

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to Canada. It is part of the larger story of how a man they called a dreamer, an impractical idealist, was influential in getting the first real social security legislation written into the statutes of this country, in bringing about long-needed safeguards for Labour, in securing protection for the weak and defenceless of the community along a dozen different lines. Many of the laws for which he worked did not reach the statute books until after his death, some have not yet been achieved. The important thing is that he did the first hard pioneering work, sometimes alone, sometimes with others.

For example, in 1929 he was the only other member to speak in support of a motion for family allowances introduced by a French-speaking M P from Quebec, a measure that lay dormant until the session before the 1945 election when it became law. He was one of the pioneers in unemployment insurance legislation. He began agitating for a national health plan in the twenties. It has not yet come into existence. The repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code and the abolition of the discriminatory features of the Immigration Act were due in large measure to his steady pressure. The thick volumes of *Hazard* are crowded with the record of these and many other struggles. This chapter is the story of two of the most spectacular and immediately successful ones, the securing of the old age pension legislation and the achieving of divorce courts for Ontario.

When J. S. Woodsworth was first elected, the matter of old age pensions had been before Parliament for some fifteen years. In 1919 a National Industrial Conference, representative of Federal and Provincial Governments together with those of employers and organized labour, had voted unanimously for a board or boards to inquire into state insurance against unemployment, sickness, invalidity, and old age. But nothing was done. That same year the National Convention of the Liberal Party adopted a resolution which read

"That in so far as may be practicable, having regard to Canada's

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financial position, an adequate system of insurance against unemployment, sickness, dependence in old age, and other disability, which would include old age pensions, widows' pensions, and maternity benefits, should be instituted by the federal government in conjunction with the governments of the several provinces."

In the first session of the new Parliament Dr. Fontaine, Liberal member for Hull, introduced a motion calling on the Government to consider ways and means of establishing old age pensions in Canada. The House agreed to the motion but nothing was done. The next year my father referred to the acceptance of this motion and asked if the Government intended to bring in old age pensions legislation that session. The reply was brief and definite: "No decision favourable to the movement has been reached."

From that moment, in season and out, the two Labour M P s kept up enquiries about old age pensions and when they might be expected to materialize. In 1924 the Prime Minister moved the appointment of a special committee to consider an old age pension scheme for Canada. William Irvine was a member of that committee which recommended such a scheme as soon as possible, urging the Government to get in touch with the provinces about it. The following year the Minister of Labour was asked what result there had been. He replied that most of the provinces were willing to consider old age pensions but that Quebec refused to have anything to do with them. Nothing more happened. Mr. King was strongly opposed to the Federal Government granting money to be administered by the provinces for any purpose, subsequently declaring this "a thoroughly vicious system."

At the end of 1925, the federal elections resulted in the return of J. S. Woodsworth (his constituency was now known as North Centre Winnipeg) and the election of A. A. Heaps from North Winnipeg. This left the Labour strength unchanged as William Irvine had been defeated. But now the two old parties were so evenly balanced that the Labour men were in

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a key position. They held the balance of power. If the Liberal Government were outvoted in the House, it would be forced to resign or bring on an immediate election. The two Labour members realized the significance of the situation and the strength of their position. They decided to use it to secure important legislation, including old age pensions. They knew they could count on the able support of the Ginger Group with whom they were now in close working arrangement.

On January 7, 1926, they wrote the following letter to Prime Minister King and a similar one to Mr. Meighen, Opposition leader.

"Dear Mr. King:

"As representatives of Labour in the House of Commons, may we ask whether it is your intention to introduce at this session (a) provision for the Unemployed, (b) Old Age Pensions.

"We are venturing to send a similar inquiry to the leader of the Opposition.

Yours sincerely,

J. S. Woodsworth

A. A. Heaps."

Mr. Meighen's reply was not encouraging. Mr. King's letter was probably the most definite thing he ever wrote. My father read it to the House on January 29, the day after it was written. To-day the original, in a neat black frame, hangs just inside the door of Woodsworth House, the CCF National Office in Ottawa. Here is the text of the Prime Minister's letter.

"Dear Mr. Woodsworth:

"Replying to the letter received from Mr. Heaps and yourself, dated January 7, in which you ask whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce at this session legislation with regard to (a) provision for the Unemployed, and (b) Old Age Pensions, I would refer you, respecting provision for the Unemployed, to the answer given in the House of Commons to-day by the Honourable Ernest Lapointe on behalf of the Government in reply to a question by yourself, and which indicated the Government's intention of

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carrying out with respect to emergency relief the practice adopted in co-operation with the provinces and municipalities in the years immediately following the war. In answer to a question from Mr. Neill [Independent M.P. for Comox-Alberni, B.C.] Mr. Lapointe further intimated that it was the intention of the Government to introduce at this session legislation with respect to Old Age Pensions.

"You will observe that the statement made by Mr. Lapointe was in accordance with the intimation which I gave to Mr. Heaps and yourself at the time of our interview, following the receipt of the communication herein referred to.

"With respect to amendments to (a) the Immigration Act, (b) the Naturalization Act and (c) the Criminal Code, which were referred to at the time of our interview, I would say that having since taken up the proposed amendments with the Ministers concerned, I feel I am in a position to assure you that legislation on these matters will also be introduced in the course of the present session.

Yours sincerely,  
W. L. Mackenzie King."

The date of this letter is January 28. The Speech from the Throne, which outlines the Government's legislative programme, had been given on January 8. It contained not a single word about old age pensions, unemployment legislation or the other matters to which the Prime Minister's letter referred. Quite evidently, until the letter came from the two Labour members, Mr. King had no intention of introducing such measures. Their letter and the knowledge that they had the power to defeat the Government were responsible for the sudden decision to bring in the new legislation, including old age pensions.

Mr. King's letter mentioned "our interview". J. S. Woods-worth never spoke of that interview, even to members of his own family, but nearly a quarter of a century later A. A. Heaps told the story publicly. At about the same time it was also described in a series of articles entitled "Through the Citizen's Looking-Glass", by Charles A. Bowman who, at the time of the interview,

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was editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*. Here is Mr Bowman's account of it in a letter to me dated July 14, 1952

"Abe Heaps has given the story correctly about our evening at Laurier House with Mr King. It came about thus. With reference to the joint letter by the Winnipeg Labour members (1926) I told Mr King they would vote to turn the Government out unless they received a favourable reply. The P.M. asked me to convey the invitation to dinner, where we could discuss it. He said if the United Farmers would support an Old Age Pensions measure, he would undertake to bring it down to the House. Henry Spencer, as Whip for the U.F.A. group, gave me that required assurance for the P.M.

"So we had dinner and an evening's discussion afterwards. When Mr King offered the Labour portfolio to your father he replied that there were members of the Cabinet who would never agree to the measures he would advocate. Mr King sagely said that your father's presence in the Cabinet could be useful, not merely for advocating measures, but for preventing some undesirable things being done. When your father declined, I did advise the P.M. that Mr Heaps would be a practical asset to the Government as Minister of Labour."

The dark-panelled dining-room at Laurier House, polished wood and pale silver glowing softly in the light, heavy draperies and soft carpets insulating its conversations from the world, must have been the scene of many interesting gatherings over the long years while Sir Wilfrid Laurier's successor deftly wove his web of government. But there can have been few interviews when an individual, so often described as an impractical visionary, quickly turned aside the offer of a Cabinet position and firmly held over the head of the Prime Minister the threat of his Government's defeat unless he would agree to immediate legislation to protect the old people of Canada. Surely great power was never exercised for a better purpose.

J. S. Woodsworth kept the story of his victory entirely to himself. In his Address speech the day after Mr King's letter, the member for North Centre Winnipeg put the portion of himself and Mr Heaps in these words:

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"In view of the measures that have been proposed, what is our position? It would seem as if this legislation merits our support—I could put it even more strongly—commands our support. . . . So long as the Government is prepared to bring down legislation which commends itself to our judgment we must continue to support it, and this attitude will therefore determine our action on the amendment now before the House and on the vote which must subsequently be taken."

The Government carried out its promise with regard to old age pensions and also the Immigration Act and Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Legislation for all three was introduced at the 1926 session. It passed the House of Commons but was thrown out by the Senate. In June the Government was defeated in the House and the famous Constitutional Crisis arose. There was a new election and the Liberal Government was returned to office.

Even though the Old Age Pension Bill had passed the Commons in the 1926 session, it had run into stiff opposition, mainly from Conservatives and Quebec Liberals. But in the Senate it had met fierce hatred. Enjoying old age pensions of \$4,000 a year themselves, the senators were reluctant to see destitute old people get \$20 a month at the age of 70. They claimed it would destroy the moral fibre of the country. The trend of their speeches can be seen from a few excerpts, which are quite typical, from the Senate Hansard for 1926.

HON. C. P. BRAUNTON "If this bill passes, the obligation of the children to look after their father and mother and grandfather and grandmother goes by the board. . . . Is it judicious for us to impose upon our country such socialistic legislation as this—because it is nothing else—when there is no call for it?"

HON. JOHN MCCORMICK "I do not think there is any doubt in the mind of those who have been following the affairs of this country for some years that the measure was proposed simply in order to secure the support of two men who call themselves Labour men in the other House."

MR. HON. SIR GEO. E. FORTER "I look with a great deal of

anxiety upon the gradual innovations that the State is making in the way of duties upon the primal duty of the family, and that next duty, of society or the municipality, and then of the province, to look after its people. And thus, out of the family is taken the finest of its flavour and the finest of its moral fibre when it forgets to look after the father and the mother and the old people who have sustained and cherished the family tree from infancy up."

But during the election campaign old age pensions had become a lively issue. The senators realized that unless they gave way, their own existence as a legislative body might be brought into question and their own "pensions" jeopardized. They decided that at this juncture discretion was the better part of valour. When the Old Age Pension Bill once more passed the Commons early in the 1927 session, the senators allowed it to become law. That some of them had not changed their opinion of the legislation is evident from the *Senate Hansard* of 1927. Here, for example, are the same three senators talking in the debate:

HON. C. P. BRAUNTON "This, in my opinion, is an iniquitous measure. First of all it is unhealthy in its basic moral principle. It is going to stunt the growth if it does not altogether blight and wither all incentive for thrift and providence in the land. Furthermore, it rests upon a very unsound financial structure."

HON. JOHN MCCORMACK "The men who promoted the bill do not represent a body of people in this country who are prepared to contribute to it; they are representative of a body of so-called Labour who do not want to encourage or practise thrift; they are men who work to 'burn the candle at both ends', spend all you make and when you are 65 or 70, and unable to work, go to those people who have been leading well-ordered lives, who have been practising the good old habit of thrift. While I do not believe it is right to pass a measure like this, that is fooling the people—and I believe it will have no other result whatever—I will support the bill in order to let it go through and thus let the people in the country who are expecting benefits from it see what a delusion and hollow mockery the whole thing is."

RT. HON. SIR GAO. E. FORSTER "Therefore my position to-day

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is this. I let it go back with all its imperfections on its head, with all its inconsistency and practical impossibility, with the idea that when it comes down to the point of application, where flowery speeches and general approbations have very little force, when it gets before members of the Federal Government, and members of the different provincial governments, it will be found to be such an amalgam of impossibilities, impracticabilities and unfairness."

[These free offerings] are characteristic of a large body of the senators who believed one way and voted the other. The day after the final Senate vote, an M.P. in the Commons asked if the bill had been passed. The reply of the Minister of Labour held more than a ghost of humour. "My information is that the Old Age Pension Bill has received the third reading and that not only has it passed the Senate but it has reformed the Senate."

Old Age Pensions became law on March 31, 1927. In an address that summer before the League for Industrial Democracy in the United States, my father gave his version of how the Old Age Pension legislation was put on the statute books.

"We [he and Mr. Heaps] indicated to both parties, very clearly, certain legislation that we thought essential. The party in office promptly introduced such legislation including old age pensions. Their bill, though attacked by the Opposition, was passed by the House but later was rejected by the Senate. The measure, however, proved to be popular. Within a few months there was another election in which old age pensions became an issue. The Government was returned. Even the Senate had to bow to public opinion. Two Labour men—with the support of their Farmer friends—and with a favourable public opinion, had turned the trick."

That there were others prepared to give him credit for the legislation was shown throughout the debates in both House and Senate. And then one hot July day in 1931 Mr. King was boasting of how the Liberal Government had brought in old age pensions. Prime Minister Bennett set him right in these words:

"What would the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre

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have said if when the bill was introduced he had listened to the speech he has listened to this afternoon? What would he have thought? He was the man who forced this upon a reluctant administration. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre never made any bones about what he wanted, he was frank and open about it, and he said 'The necessity of one party is my opportunity, and I am going to press it to the full for the benefit of my friends.' And he did."

Who were his friends? The old people of Canada for whom he, with the help of the handful of Labour and Farmer M P s, had won the first thin edge of security

### "WOODSWORTH OBJECTS TO SACRED TIE BEING BROKEN IN CHUNKS"

Beneath this vigorous headline the *Toronto Telegram* of April 21, 1928 informed its readers in sprightly language that the previous day the member for Winnipeg North Centre had held up 75 divorce bills in the House of Commons. It happened when the Prime Minister anxious to expedite the clogging volume of business, had moved to shorten the regular procedure and get rid of these bills quickly. "Anyway," said the reporter, "the little Winnipeg preacher got up on his hind legs and howled. He declared that this divorce legislation was being treated altogether too lightly by the Commons. Some day he was going to demand the House go into details on one of these bills. Then it might be necessary to ask the lady member to leave, to clear the galleries, and to ask Haward to cease to function."

That protest marked the opening of my father's long campaign to get divorce courts for the province of Ontario. Back in the twenties the only way for people in Ontario and Quebec to get a divorce was by means of a private bill in Parliament. That meant three separate readings in the Senate and three in the Commons. It meant a detailed examination of the evidence by a committee of senators, a printed report available to all senators and members of the Commons, and a session in the Private Bills

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Committee of the Commons as well. It meant, as Father was to point out, a great hardship for poor people seeking divorce because of the heavy expense entailed in bringing witnesses to Ottawa.

There were other grave objections to this procedure. The number of petitions was growing, until in 1928 there were so many that they threatened to choke other business in both Houses, and even then about a quarter of them would have to be laid over to the following session, a whole year's added misery for the unhappy families concerned. That session the situation had become so difficult that a bill had been brought before the Senate to try to get a divorce court for Ontario. That session there was a new high of nearly 300 divorce bills, 95% of them coming from the province of Ontario. It was in an effort to relieve the congestion that Mr. King proposed to scamp the regular legislative procedure.

J. S. Woodsworth wasn't particularly interested in going into the merits or demerits of divorce as such. But he didn't see why there couldn't be regular divorce court procedure in Ontario as there had been for many years in other provinces. He didn't see why the major political parties had to continue turning the blind eye to a bad situation just because large sections of people in the two central provinces refused to recognize the existence of divorce. It *did* exist and Parliament was not the place to deal with it. He was revolted by the idea of passing these bills "in batches." He blamed himself for having sat on the Commons Private Bills Committee for some years without protesting the disgraceful way these divorce petitions were handled without proper examination. He knew that if the members read all the evidence they would have no time for their other work, but he knew, too, that to pass these bills without knowing the facts was wrong.

A few nights after his first protest he rose and told the House of the unexpected amount of public support he had received. He explained that while he had no intention of blocking these

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bills to prevent them from passing, he felt that something must be done to make sure that the children of dissolved marriages were provided for, that the women, many of whom had contracted venereal disease from their husbands, had some means of support after the divorce, that both men and women were prevented from re-marrying until given a clean bill of health by a physician. He sought to move an amendment to one divorce petition along these lines but was ruled out of order. Next day the *Toronto Mail and Empire* reported that in the crowded galleries of the House the previous evening the great percentage had been women, and that while Mr. Woodsworth's frank arguments "bordered always on the delicate", it was notable that none of the ladies withdrew.

Several days passed and the House was once more dealing with divorce bills. This time my father put his amendment to a vote and it was turned down by 21 to 53. But he had insisted on discussing the rather sordid evidence in two cases, and indicated that it was his intention to do so with the others just as long as it was Parliament's responsibility to deal with divorce petitions.

Knowing him, the House must have realized that this was no idle threat, but the 1928 session was merely a foretaste of things to come. The Senate bill for an Ontario divorce court having failed, J. S. Woodsworth himself put a bill on the Commons Order Paper early next session "to provide in the province of Ontario for the dissolution and the annulment of marriage". It didn't get very far but its sponsor did. As the grist of divorce bills started coming through the parliamentary mill, he began to ask questions on the various petitions. "Are there any children?"

"What provision is being made for them?" "May we have an explanation from the mover and the seconder?" . . . "Possibly the sponsor of this bill would give us an outline of the case." Often the sponsor wasn't in the Chamber at the time and that meant scurrying round to look for him and further delay.

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J. S. Woodsworth's questioning became so much an established fact that a story is told of how one day, among a batch of private bills petitioning for divorce, there was a bill dealing with the building of a bridge. It came up in due course and the member for North Centre Winnipeg, thinking it was another divorce bill, automatically asked "Are there any children?" Members were glad for a chance to laugh in the midst of their weariness. Polite, untiring, implacable, he held up the stream until the Government began to fear that the session would never end. The Prime Minister was moved to promise that something would be done next year to solve the problem. So my father let up a little in his tactics.

But 1930 came and there was no action from the Government. So he put his bill on the Order Paper again. Backed by Bill Irvine who was once more in the House, he forced and won a vote to bring it up for second reading instead of allowing it to slide to the bottom of the list where it wouldn't be reached. But then an Ontario Liberal tried to sidetrack it by moving instead for an educational campaign to cut down the number of divorces. That amendment was lost. A second amendment sought to require the Ontario Government to have enabling legislation ready before the Woodsworth bill was passed. This, too, was lost. A third amendment would have the bill set aside till the following session "so that it can be thoroughly digested by the people of Ontario." This amendment was also voted down. Finally, at long last, the Labour member's bill became law by a vote of 100 to 85.

J. S. Woodsworth had won his fight to get divorce courts for the province of Ontario. His persistence and skilful handling of parliamentary strategy achieved success in spite of the solid opposition of powerful sections of the House and the country. For example, Prime Minister King voted in favour of all three blocking amendments and against the bill on its final vote. The Catholic members, with two exceptions, worked against the bill all the way. The Catholic bishops issued a circular commanding

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their followers in Parliament to vote against the bill because that Church refuses to recognize divorce. In this matter the Catholics found themselves allied with half-a-dozen prominent Orangemen who, because of the anti-divorce sentiment in rural Ontario, opposed the legislation, even while they themselves were introducing many divorce petitions to Parliament.

To get the Ontario divorce court bill past this wall of opposition was a tremendous legislative feat for a private member. J. S. Woodsworth achieved it because he was able to call to his help all the progressive elements in Parliament and throughout the country. Because he saw a little farther into the future than his fellows, because he had no private ends to serve, because he had the courage to fight for his convictions, he was able to do what is possible only in a democracy: he moved the people by their own consent to real achievement.

## CHAPTER XVI

### TO MAKE MEN FREE

SECTION 98 has been used particularly against the Communists in Canada. Perhaps it is not necessary for me to say that I am not a member of the Communist Party and that I do not agree with many of its principles and methods. But I do not believe in putting my political opponents in jail."

The slight, spare figure near the end of the Commons Chamber was addressing the members, his voice ringing out to the farthest shadowy corner of the House. His hair and beard were white now, but it was with undiminished vigour that he pressed his case, turning at this point to the Conservatives on his right, his voice sharp with reproof. They were the ones who had fought to keep this iniquitous legislation on the statute books these many years, this legislation hastily passed in a moment of panic during the Winnipeg Strike. This was 1936. For fifteen years he had been trying to get rid of this legislation so alien to our tradition. Under the great Gothic windows members had come and gone; some were dead and some had been defeated, but still the rows of seats had been filled by men to whose minds and hearts he had tried to appeal. Vainly? No, the lost causes of yesterday are the cherished beliefs of to-day. And to-day a new victory was in the making. Section 98 was coming off the statute books of Canada.

J. S. Woodsworth looked across to the Government benches and congratulated Hon. Ernest Lapointe, Minister of Justice, on his unflagging zeal in the fight which was now being crowned with success. For years these two men, with views so dissimilar on many matters, had worked together in this cause. Half a

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dozen times M. Lapointe had succeeded in getting repeal bills past the Commons, only to see them done to death in the Senate. Following five years of Conservative Government, he was once more Minister of Justice. Now in his first session he had once more introduced his bill. This time the Senate gave way. The bill passed both Houses. Section 98 was gone and political freedom was now safer in Canada.

It had been a long fight. The Winnipeg member looked back on it as he sat in his office in the big leather chair that had once belonged to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and that A. A. Heaps, upholsterer by trade, had recovered for his Labour colleague. A long fight that had begun during the hysteria in 1919 when he and Fred Dixon were editing the strike bulletin. He glanced up at a photograph on the wall. Dixon was dead now. What a magnificent defence he had made for freedom of the press during his trial! Dixon would be glad to know that Section 98 had been repealed. After all, this business of individual freedom must never be taken for granted. It had been built up painfully, bit by bit, by those who had come before us. Its foundations struck deep into history, every stone in the structure had been won by suffering and sacrifice, the structure of freedom was a sacred trust, in our day we dared not neglect our responsibility.

There were still serious gaps in the structure, gaps in constant danger of being widened by those who wanted liberty only for themselves, widened by the apathy of those who failed to understand the indivisible nature of freedom. Henry Nevinnson had grasped the need for never-ending vigilance when he said "The battle of freedom is never done and the field never quiet."

Take this fight for the repeal of Section 98. J. S. Woodsworth opened a volume of his earlier speeches. He recalled that back in 1926 he had gone rather fully into the implications of this legislation. He had explained how it reversed the whole tradition of British law. Here it was. "We used to be taught that a man

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ought to be regarded as innocent until he was proven guilty." But he had shown how, under Section 98, a man could be presumed to be a member of an unlawful association and convicted of it, too, unless he could prove that he was not a member. A hopeless task! What illegal organization was going to make its membership records available?

True, he had admitted that Section 98 had never been used-up to that time—but there it was, a standing threat to freedom. He had explained just how serious a threat it could be. "If an association is holding a street meeting and someone comes along to listen to what has been said, he is then presumed to be a member of such association and the burden of proof lies with him." Being convicted of belonging to an unlawful association could mean twenty years' imprisonment. So could importing a book in which there was anything defending revolution—a ban which took in a rather wide literary field. The law had other bad features, but these served to show its character.

Strange how few of the members had been really disturbed by the existence of such a law on the statute books! They didn't seem to realize what could happen in a time of panic when a government might lose its head. They didn't seem to have read much history—about the Star Chamber abuses in England or the "lettres de cachet" in France. Oh yes, there were some members who realized the danger fully, men like Ernest Lapointe and others who knew something of the great traditions of Liberalism, and of course the members of the Ginger Group. Outside the House there had been many individuals and organizations. He thought particularly of the Civil Liberties associations in various cities and the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada. Year after year during the twenties, by correspondence and delegation, they had tried hard to get Section 98 repealed.

Then came the Stock Market crash in the fall of 1929, followed by deepening depression and the social unrest that went with it. Prime Minister King was replaced by Prime Minister Bennett who talked about "setting the iron heel of

ruthlessness" against those who advocated social change, Communists and others. In the big cities there were incidents of disorder and violence. J. S. Woodsworth had seen that Section 98 was now the real menace he had predicted it could become. In 1931 he introduced an amendment to provide that not the organization involved in a meeting, but the actual contents of the speeches made at it should be the ground for regarding any meeting as lawful or otherwise.

In support of his motion he told the House the kind of thing the police had been doing, presumably under the authority of Section 98. For example, in January, 1929, the Board of Police Commissioners of Toronto had decreed that, in regard to one particular public hall, "as a condition of continuing the licence, all addresses thereafter should be in the English language, being the only language understood by the police officers." "A most extraordinary situation, that!" he had exclaimed. "Since the police officials understand only one language, every Canadian must conform and speak nothing but English. We in the West have not only the English and French languages, but hundreds of thousands of our people speak Ukrainian, Hungarian, German, Yiddish and so on."

J. S. Woodsworth smiled as he remembered how indignant the French-speaking M.P.s from Quebec had been to learn that because Toronto police officers understood only English, the French language had been made illegal. At last the House was beginning to understand the possibilities of Section 98! But even then, in 1931, his amendment had been voted down. People just didn't seem to understand that the effective way to handle Communists was not to suppress them but to force them to come out into the sunshine of freedom where their ideas would shrivel beneath the criticism of men able to speak their minds without fear. Besides, there was the danger that suppressing the ideas of the Communists might lead to the danger of other ideas being suppressed. Surely he had said something like that in 1931. Yes, here it was—and he turned to his last words in the debate.

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"A number of the ideas of the Communist Party are not my ideas, but that does not mean to say that I should try to have them suppressed by force. If one set of opinions is suppressed by force, it will be only a matter of time until other ideas are similarly suppressed. So that even though the Communists are bitterly opposed to us, we still stand for freedom of speech, and I trust that in this position we shall be joined by a great many other citizens."

Well, the depression had deepened and so had the disorders. Just before the end of 1931, Section 98 had been used for the first time. Eight prominent members of the Communist Party were tried and sentenced to five years in Kingston penitentiary. Early in the 1932 session, J. S. Woodsworth remembered, he had risen in his place in the House to introduce once again his amendment to the Criminal Code. And then something profoundly shocking had happened, something that had never before happened when a member sought to introduce a bill. He remembered how he and others were thunderstruck to hear the Prime Minister shout "No!" As soon as it found its voice, the House gave Mr. Bennett a rough time of it. He was forced to permit a vote to be taken in the regular way. The bill had been defeated, of course, and so had a second amendment which the Winnipeg Labour member had introduced a few days later. But the rights of a free Parliament had been upheld!

One of the curious things about the whole fight for the repeal of Section 98, he remembered, was how he had been under fire, not only from the Conservatives but from the Communists as well. The Communists had no words black enough to describe his insistence on peaceful and constitutional methods to achieve social change. For example, back in 1928, Maurice Spector, Communist writer in the *Canadian Labor Monthly*, had attacked his 'wilful blindness' on this score. Yes, here in his scrapbook was the article, quoting *Hansard* for that session as follows:

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MR. EDWARDS (Cons. Ont.) "May I ask the hon. gentleman a question?"

MR. WOODSWORTH "Certainly."

MR. EDWARDS "Does he think that any organization in Canada should be permitted to seek economic or industrial changes by violence or injury to persons?"

MR. WOODSWORTH "Most decidedly no."

Obviously the Communists had no use for a man who opposed violence and chaos as instruments of change. He had known that for a good many years. But he believed that every individual had the right to freedom of speech and he intended to see that his enemies got it as well as himself. After all, that was the only way he could be sure of keeping it himself.

But the Conservatives—that was something else. In theory, they believed in conserving the rights won by their forebears; in practice, they had attacked his every attempt to preserve those freedoms. They did not dare assert that he was a member of the Communist Party, but their constant insinuations were unmistakable. Evidently they couldn't understand that a man could fight for another's right to state opinions with which he profoundly disagreed. He remembered how, after his visit to the Soviet Union in 1931, the Conservatives had redoubled their innuendoes. It couldn't have been because of his reports on conditions in that country, because he recalled clearly that they had given comfort to neither side, being a mixture of both good and bad impressions. And then, after the Communists had been sent to Kingston and he had dared to continue pressing for the repeal of Section 98—that "safeguard" which kept them there—the indignation of the Conservatives, and others, knew no bounds.

But he had told them quite clearly once more during the 1933 session that a principle was at stake, a principle which must be upheld, regardless of our opinion of those it affected at the moment. And he turned to his speech in the debate

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"We have been taught that a man can be convicted only when he has actually committed some crime, but these men have not been convicted of any crime. They were convicted of holding a certain belief, and I say that is something quite new in British law."

For a while longer his mind kept going over the various phases of the long fight to repeal Section 98. He thought of the points he had made in this final debate. After fifteen years of hard battling! He thought of how, to-day, in an effort to make the members realize the far-reaching character of Section 98, he had held up in the House a copy of Leon Trotsky's *Defence of Terrorism* and told them that he had got it, together with quite an armful of similar works, from the Parliamentary Library. It was a fact that, as the Criminal Code now stood, Mr. Hardy, the Librarian, could be arrested for having such books on the premises, books whose ideas should be familiar to every intelligent person, even while he repudiated them completely. And J. S. Woodsworth smiled as he thought of Mr. Hardy's reaction to hearing that he was liable to arrest for having a good library (Mr. Hardy still smiles about it himself.) But that was the insidious thing about such legislation. Under certain circumstances it could become highly dangerous to freedom of any kind. Well, that particular fight was over now, and he was tired. Never again would Section 98 hang like a sword over the liberties of the Canadian people. One more battle had been won for freedom in this country.

The other piece of "panicky legislation" arising from the Winnipeg Strike was the amendment to the Immigration Act which gave the immigration authorities power to deport any person not born in Canada and suspected of political crime, without any public trial or hearing other than a departmental investigation. As my father said in 1927: "The law as it stands virtually makes the Immigration Department a judicial body."

A brief passage from the *Hastard* of 1928, when the amendment was finally repealed, gives a flash of insight into the temper of the House which had passed it nine years earlier:

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MR. WOODSWORTH "As a matter of fact the legislation we are dealing with to-night was passed through this House in 1919 in twenty minutes."

MR. DUNNIN (Minister of Railways and Canals) "And without explanation as to what it really means."

MR. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition) "And unanimously"

From his first session in the House, J. S. Woodsworth worked to repeal this "outrageous" legislation. It was one of the things Prime Minister King promised to do in his famous letter about old age pensions. Actually, legislation to repeal the Immigration Act amendment was passed by the Commons several times and turned down each time by the Senate. Its action gave one more reason for my father's advocating the abolition of that body, at least in its present form.

One of the excuses given for retaining the legislation was that the immigration authorities must have power to exclude undesirables from this country.

"Personally," said the Labour member, "I have no objection to deporting undesirables. If we have undesirables in the Dominion, whether they are English or alien, I have no objection to deporting them, but I would insist that they be not deported without trial, which is another matter. I know perfectly well that there are certain classes of people such as the feeble-minded, prostitutes and others of that type, obviously undesirable, members of which might be deported without trial."

But in such cases, he held, investigation should be made and action taken immediately after their arrival. What was so dangerous was that people could live here for years, acquire Canadian domicile, and yet at any time be picked up and deported as "undesirable" for a number of reasons, including the Government's objection to their political ideas.

During the twenties, for example, my father brought up a number of cases where labour organizers were refused admission to Canada, even for brief visits. In 1923 there was the case of Alexander Howat, ex-president of the miners' union in Kansas,

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who had been invited to visit Cape Breton by the coal miners there. When questioned, the Minister stated that he had been refused admission because he might become a public charge. Pressed for further explanation, the Minister said that Mr Howat had spent fifteen months in jail in Kansas, at public expense. This somewhat ingenious reasoning was pounced upon by J. S. Woodsworth who flatly accused the Government, not only of deporting people whose opinions it disliked, but also of excluding them, even for brief visits in this country.

In 1928 the obnoxious amendment to the Immigration Act was finally repealed. But with the coming of the depression, new problems of civil liberty were created and the member for North Centre Winnipeg was once more battling with the Immigration Act. In 1931 he moved a bill to prevent the deportation of people who had been in Canada for more than ten years. He explained that during the previous year almost 2,000 people had been deported from Canada as public charges. The Government had got into the habit of deporting people for the sole reason that they were unable to make a living under depression conditions.

He wanted the House to realize just what that meant to the families concerned. For example, in October 1930, a woman in Hamilton, the mother of three teen-aged children, had been sent back to England after eighteen years in this country. What about her children? What about herself? Yes, she was an epileptic, an "undesirable", subject to deportation at any time. But she had been allowed to remain here without question for eighteen years. Then, through no fault of her own, the depression had hit and she had been picked up and deported. The same thing had happened to the mother of four children who had been here for sixteen years, and to many similar persons. "After these people have been in this country for so long a period, the home in the Old Country has been broken up, new ties have been formed in this country." He urged that ten years' resi-

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dence in Canada should render such persons safe from deportation. But his bill didn't get very far.

The depression grew worse. In two and a half years the Government had deported nearly 10,000 people simply because they couldn't support themselves. In the 1933 session J. S. Woodsworth introduced an amendment to provide that people forced to accept unemployment relief would not thereby be rendered liable to deportation proceedings. He could quite understand the pressure that municipalities, overburdened and poverty-stricken, must be exerting on the Federal Government, "but I do not think that warrants us as a country in deporting people of this class. It would seem to me that in such conditions we should carry immigrants of this class, just as we are trying to carry our own native-born Canadians." But his amendment died in its early stages.

By 1935 it had become obvious that a new abuse was growing up, the practice of deporting those suspected of having Communist sympathies. My father asked about a report in the *Ottawa Citizen* of May 5 that the editor of the Finnish daily at Sudbury and the paper's translator had been arrested the previous day in a police raid on the newspaper office, bundled into a car and driven away to an unknown destination. Enquiries at police headquarters elicited no information, but the Attorney-General of Ontario was more communicative. "This man was in trouble three times for statements derogatory to His Majesty," he declared. "Now he has been going too far again and we are certainly not going to put up with violence." The Attorney-General added that it was essential to protect Canadians and that "Reds" who incited to violence would be sent out of the country.

"Apparently these men were spirited away from Sudbury," commented J. S. Woodsworth. "Somebody near me suggests they were kidnapped. I do not say that, but it is extraordinary if men can be taken in this way, seemingly without any charge being made. . . You condemn the Communists for this [agitation], but let me





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warn you that actions of this kind are doing more than all the Communists in the country can do to undermine faith in British institutions."

The Minister proved strangely evasive in this and other similar cases which the Labour member kept bringing to the attention of the House.

My father's years of work among the new Canadian settlers on the prairies had given him a great deal of sympathy with them and a strong desire to be of help in their problems. These problems became intensified during the depression years and bound up with the question of civil liberty.

As a child I remember when Peter Verigin, first leader of the religious sect known as the Doukhobors, came to supper at our home in Winnipeg. Mother told us we couldn't have meat because our guest believed it wrong to kill any creature. Young and curious, I remember asking if that applied even to mosquitoes when they were very thick. Father spent two weeks in a Doukhobor colony once and was much impressed with their communal ways of living. He brought back a beautiful doily of knitted lace which decorated our front room for years. The particular bond of sympathy between himself and the Doukhobors was, of course, their opposition to military force and their determination to keep clear of it and the society which used it.

He had no use for the violence of the small group known as the Sons of Freedom, the burning of schoolhouses and the blasting of bridges were completely abhorrent to him. But in 1931 when the Government introduced legislation to prevent nude parading, my father went at some length into the history and religious beliefs of the Doukhobors to show the futility of this particular kind of legislation. He had no particular objection to the purpose of the bill: he supposed we had to uphold Canadian standards of decency even though the nude parading of the Doukhobors was due not to lax morals but to religious ideas. But he was quite sure this measure wouldn't work. Subsequent

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developments in British Columbia were to prove him right. They were also to convert quite a number of people to the view he laid before the House.

"What we have to do is in some way learn to understand these people, understand their point of view, do a good deal of educational work among them, and not consider that merely by repressive measures we will overcome these deep-seated religious instincts and social practices which have been prevalent among this particular group for at least several centuries."

Then in 1934 the Bennett Government took further steps against the Doukhobors when it passed legislation to disfranchise all Doukhobors in British Columbia and their descendants in perpetuity. The reason given was that the Doukhobors had refused to allow themselves to be enumerated for the census. Liberals alleged that it was actually for the purpose of securing safe Conservative seats in the Kootenay area of British Columbia. My father protested vigorously against the disfranchisement of any group of Canadian citizens introducing an amendment to cut the proposed discrimination from the Franchise Act. His amendment was defeated by a vote of 27 to 56, which, in a House of 245 members, indicated to him a striking lack of concern for civil liberty on the part of the majority of the M.P.s.

During this debate my father gave wide publicity to the CCF stand of equal rights for all citizens, regardless of their racial as well as of their religious origin. He said:

"I protest very decidedly against Dominion legislation following the lines of some one particular province. It seems to me that if we are acting here on behalf of the Dominion at large, our legislation should be uniform, and there should be no exception of any kind for the prejudices of some one particular province. I have felt that way for quite a long time with regard to the practical disfranchisement of Orientals on the Coast. If an Oriental in Alberta or Saskatchewan may vote, I think the Oriental ought to be able to vote in British Columbia . . ."

It was at this point that Hon. Ian Mackenzie interjected: "Is

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the hon. member in favour of enfranchising Orientals in British Columbia?" J. S. Woodsworth replied evenly "I am in favour of enfranchising Orientals in British Columbia." And he added that the recently formed CCF was solidly behind him in that position.

British Columbia Liberals were jubilant. For years they had built up a policy of discrimination against Orientals, among whom they lumped East Indians. They had refused them the franchise and this refusal was used to deny them various economic and social rights enjoyed by the rest of the population. The Liberals, and the Conservatives as well, constantly fanned the flames of racial hatred, especially at election time. The rising strength of the CCF in the West Coast province was worrying them. Now they felt they had the perfect stick to beat down the new party. Of course, if they had looked back into *Hansard* they could have found that as early as 1923, J. S. Woodsworth had asked why the Orientals should not have the vote like anyone else. But now they felt they had both him and the CCF in a jam.

The Liberals made a photostatic copy of the *Hansard* page showing the exchange between the CCF leader and Ian MacKenzie. They printed it in huge advertisements in every newspaper and displayed it on every platform in the province of British Columbia during the federal election campaign of 1935. They forced the CCF to take the initiative in a campaign to free the West Coast province from racial discrimination of every kind. It took a dozen years for the people of British Columbia to become sufficiently indignant and well organized to secure the franchise for citizens of Japanese, Chinese, East Indian, and native Indian origin. To-day, with the exception of discrimination against the Mennonites, another religious sect, British Columbia can claim to have removed provincial franchise bars.

Credit for leadership in this campaign must go to Angus MacInnis, federal CCF member for Vancouver East. Stung to anger by the realization that a political party in Canada would

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use racial discrimination as a means of election, he began operations in the 1936 season, following his re-election to the House of Commons. He proposed a resolution that if there were groups to whom, because of racial or religious origins, Canada would not grant the franchise, they should be excluded from the country. This was not at all to the taste of those people who wanted to continue importing Orientals as a source of cheap labour. Nor did Prime Minister King relish publicity about the fact that one Canadian province had such glaring racial discrimination. Bringing this blot squarely into the national and international spotlight instead of leaving it hidden from sight behind the Rockies, was a major step toward getting it removed. Speaking to the MacInnis resolution, J. S. Woodsworth summed up the feelings which finally moved British Columbia citizens to action.

"Surely it is not a good thing to have in our midst a subject race, as well-educated as we are, many of them better-educated, because the Japanese are not an inferior people—it is not, I say, a good thing for us to have such people here trying to earn a precarious living while excluded from a great many occupations, and with a rankling sense of injustice because they are not granted full rights of British citizenship."

Had he lived a few years longer, he would have seen the franchise barrier removed and, indeed, Liberals and Conservatives falling over each other in their eagerness to secure the Oriental vote. But he would also have seen citizens of Oriental origin in British Columbia given an opportunity for fuller citizenship in the land of their birth, and Canada enabled to go into the councils of the United Nations as a country well on the way to believing in the equality of people regardless of their racial origin.

## FOR A FULLER LIFE

**A**RCH DALE, political cartoonist of the *Manitoba Free Press* was adept at depicting J. S. Woodsworth's persistence in impressing his ideas on the public. One of his drawings during the middle twenties shows the Winnipeg member, lean body and scrawny neck projecting above a pulpit like desk from which his pounding fist is sending his notes flying in all directions. Over his shoulder his pointer indicates a blackboard on which appears the head of a savage looking devil with pointed ears, horns and a mouthful of ferocious teeth. The devil is labelled CAPITALISM. With bent brows and an expression of intense earnestness the Labour M.P. is addressing a bewildered little John Q. Public who sits at a desk beneath him, pencil to his mouth. "Why are we in this state?" demands the teacher, and in the same breath answers his own question: "Because of capitalism. Capitalism is to blame for war, unemployment, black rust, grasshoppers, fish stories, traffic accidents, mosquitoes, ingrowing toe nails, crooners, dust storms, colic and chilblains."

Confronted by J. S. Woodsworth explaining the economic system, the House of Commons must often have felt itself like the cartoonist's John Q. Public, bewildered, sometimes indignant, but always listening. Members readily grasped the fact that he wanted to replace capitalism by a new form of society. But the "why" and the "how" and the "what" were not so easily understood by those who felt that any change was bound to be a change for the worse.

Outside audiences were more fortunate, for there my father used his charts to put his story in graphic form. On one chart a huge spider's web showed the intricate interlocking of every

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phase of life to-day agriculture industry, business, education, government. At the centre with the dollar sign on his back was the spider, Finance, dominating the entire fabric and drawing his profit from the whole. Audiences were quite able to relate this picture to their own experience. But you couldn't use a chart in the House of Commons. You could only do your best to explain the matter simply, with the likelihood that you would be misunderstood.

My father realized that the only kind of social change most members visualized was violent revolution such as had just occurred in Russia. Many of them had not even heard of the British Labour Party, many who had heard of it expected it to turn to violence and bloodshed at the first opportunity. In Canada, at the beginning of the twenties, any criticism of the economic system was generally regarded as black treachery to our ancestors and descendants, something to be vigorously squelched by a reference to Red Revolution in Russia, if in deed it were to be taken at all seriously.

This was the atmosphere in which J. S. Woodsworth had to discuss his most basic conception, the need for creating a new form of society. "I believe economic justice is the only basis of permanent stability in society," he declared. "In my judgment we have not that justice." Most members wanted to brush off all talk about social change as the ravings of a crank or worse. There was even some grumbling about sending him back to Russia, until they found out about his United Empire Loyalist background and his Oxford education. But there was that about the talk of their fellow-member that just wouldn't brush off, it compelled their attention.

He didn't act like a red revolutionary. He didn't think like one. He had no use for class war and repeatedly stated his belief that no society founded upon hatred could endure. Instead of wanting to fasten the dictatorship of the proletariat upon Canada, he talked of a new social order where each individual would have more freedom than was possible to-day. Indeed

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he approached the problem of social change as part of the problem of personal freedom. He believed that the intricate spider's web of modern society had drawn away the old freedoms from people, the freedom to work with one's own tools and to make one's own living in the home workshop. But that didn't mean he opposed the great industrial machine. No, he believed that through it people could gain new economic and social freedoms, but only if they were prepared to work together for them within the framework of the community.

To-day's big problem, he felt, could be stated simply. It was to ensure to the community the resources by which each of its members could have opportunity for a full and creative life. But as long as a tiny fraction of our population owned and controlled the resources by which all must live, there could be neither security nor freedom. The solution as J. S. Woodsworth saw it was to use our political freedom, the ballot, to secure the eventual election of a government which would take the initiative in transforming by peaceful, democratic means the competitive capitalist order into one of co-operation and brotherhood. Only in such a new society could the human spirit evolve into fuller freedom.

All this was far from the minds of his fellow-members as he rose to make his first speech on the Budget back in 1922. Accustomed to speeches on tariff, taxation and patronage, it seemed strangely irrelevant when this new M.P. declared that during the past few years there had been a remarkable shift of the wealth of Canada from a large to a comparatively small group. He gave a long, detailed account of how this had come to pass; of how, in the early days, the Crown had owned all the land and other natural resources, of how these had been alienated, first by the purchases of the fur-traders, then by grants to pioneer settlers and the churches, then by wholesale gifts to the railways.

This was dead, text-book stuff, thought the members. It

didn't belong in the House of Commons at all. But they were irritated and vaguely uncomfortable when the Winnipeg member declared

"We have had in this country, this new, young country of ours, a much more outrageous proceeding than that of the alienation of the common lands of Great Britain. We have had the alienation of millions of acres of lands, and of the most valuable resources of this country, so that to-day the greater part of these are in the hands of private individuals, and now we are told that the public has no claim upon them."

This steady alienation of public resources, he claimed, had brought about the steady shift of wealth into the hands of a relatively small group. Industry had become concentrated into fewer and fewer hands until to-day the capital of this country was highly centralized. To-day the financial institutions had control not only of the commercial and industrial enterprises of this country, "but indirectly of the very life of the labour people of this country." This had brought about a bad situation.

"People engaged in industries say they cannot get along without their profits. On the other hand, we have an ever-increasing number of people on the very verge of starvation. Unless we can in some way alter the system or introduce another system in its place, we are going to see tens of thousands of our fellow-citizens going down and under."

The way that man kept saying "we"—just as though he and the rest of the members were responsible for things the way they were! He had things all mixed up. In Canada any man willing to work could make his way in life all right. There had to be profits to make men take risks. If there was a little unemployment just now it was purely temporary, due to post-war conditions. There were always charitable organizations to look after the deserving poor. But that didn't seem to satisfy the member for Winnipeg.

He went on now to say that the Federal Government should

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take the initiative in dealing with the situation, and that "when it comes to a choice between profits and property rights on one hand and human welfare on the other, there should be no hesitation in saying that we are going to place the human welfare consideration first." Human welfare first well, they could all agree with that. Or could they? It sounded just like what they were urged to do in Church and Sunday School. But you couldn't do that in the business world! What would happen to capital? What would happen to law and order? What would happen? Nothing would happen. The whole thing was fantastic, just so much talk!

Something like this must have been going on in the minds of the members as they listened. In later years J. S. Woodsworth's speeches about social organization would be peppered with interjections from both sides of the House. That was after the depression had driven home to men's minds the fact that social changes were on the way, whether they liked them or not. That was after the Price Spreads Report had confirmed all the basic economic facts that the Labour member had stated a dozen years earlier. That was after a new party based on socialist principles had become a challenge to old-line politics. But in 1922 this whole long Budget speech was made without a single interruption nor was there any reference to it in the speeches which followed. Evidently the whole subject seemed too academic and far-fetched to be bothered with.

It is interesting to note that not once during that first session did J. S. Woodsworth describe himself as a socialist, and for many years he preferred the term "labour." His use of the word was wide, covering those in almost any walk of life who sympathized with his vision of the new society. His avoidance of the word "socialist" was due mainly to the heavy weight of prejudice against it, caused by the rigidity of European Marxians. That he was at this time a convinced socialist is clear from his declaration in the House the following session that "Socialism

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

is the economic gospel of the Labour movement." Two years later he added

"I am not afraid of the word 'Socialism' which comes from a perfectly good Latin word which means 'comradeship', which means that to-day we as individuals are no longer living isolated lives, that no nation is any longer living an isolated life, but rather that we are living in society in a thousand and one complicated relationships and that we must adapt our political ideals and our political institutions and our political policies to meet the new situation that confronts us."

The Winnipeg Labour member began his 1923 Budget speech by criticizing some tariff changes. The Liberal Manifesto of the previous year, he noted, had advocated "placing implements of production and food on the free list", but now that promise had been forgotten and "in some instances at least, the duty on the necessities of life has been greatly increased. A member interjected helpfully "What about raisins?" The Labour member read in agreement a protest from a women's organization against the increased duty on that article of food.

This was better! Members could understand this sort of talk in a Budget debate. Perhaps the Winnipeg member had come down to earth at last. But their hope was short-lived. He went on to an exhaustive analysis of the rise of the capitalist system and its effects, stressing the need for bringing our social thinking up to date. We face a situation where the worker is no longer independent but has become divorced from his tools of production. In parts of this continent even the farmer has become a hired man for the great land syndicates, while in Canada the owner-farmer is becoming less secure. A new owning class has developed with its distinctive outlook and morals. Accumulation of wealth has become the new virtue. Ownership of wealth means predominant influence over educational agencies, schools, churches, universities, the press, as well as over politics and government. Parliament has become "the mere façade behind which go on the operations of finance capital and the real

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government of the country". And apart from all this, the capitalist system "is failing to supply large numbers of men, women and children with the necessities of life . . . and is setting one group against another and one nation against other nations. On economic, social and moral grounds alike, this system has proved unsound and thoroughly evil."

What then, he asked, does Labour propose? "We say that there ought to be democracy, not only in politics but in industry." To secure that democracy will require wide measures of public ownership. "Some things may be owned by the Federal Government, others may be owned by our Provincial governments, I can see very well how great natural resources like our coal mines might be brought under provincial control." The important thing was to make the productive machinery function in such a way as to supply the needs of every person in the community.

"Our contention is that we have gone on and on and on in this system, each man producing simply to sell, producing as much as he can, producing irrespective of the real needs of the people, until we have forgotten the primary reason of production. We say that we have to get back to fundamentals, so to organize our productive and distributional processes that we shall produce in order that the people may use."

While there were no interruptions during this speech, a Liberal who spoke later in the debate expressed the feelings of many, no doubt, when he gave thanks that we were no longer "reading in the Lamentations of Jeremiah", and then exclaimed:

"The idea of having any hard feeling against capital or against capitalists or making laws against capital or capitalists! Such legislation would be the wreck and ruin of any country. We have seen it done in Russia. I must here admit that I cannot distinguish very clearly between a Communist, a Socialist, an Anarchist, and an out-and-out Bolshevik. There may be a difference but I fail to see it."

## *J S Woodsworth*

Following which confession, the member returned to the discussion of tariff, taxation and patronage

There were those in the gallery of the House of Commons upon whom J S Woodsworth's speeches made an altogether different impression. Among them was Grant MacNeil, National Secretary of the Great War Veterans' Association, a young ex-serviceman whose overseas experience had made him deeply thoughtful about the democracy that he and others had helped to save. He and a number of like-minded friends got into conversation with the Winnipeg member. The result was a study group which met once a week in his office in the Parliament Buildings, on the session-free Wednesday night when most M.P.'s sought rest and relaxation. Mr MacNeil recalls how they would carefully fasten great sheets of brown paper to the office walls, and then J S Woodsworth would lead discussion on the evolution of productive methods, of social institutions, of politics, of morals - until the brown sheets were covered with writing and the hour was late.

Many of these young men were to take their new ideas with them into positions of influence in the professions, in business, in the Civil Service, where their thinking helped to leaven the ideas of those about them. Grant MacNeil was the only one to go directly into politics. As he explained "When the CCF was formed in 1932 and needed recruits I was ready." Since then he has served as a member both at Ottawa and in Victoria, has worked with the trade union movement, has headed the CCF in British Columbia, has taught literally hundreds of people how to pool their knowledge through discussion. The early study group at Ottawa is but one example of how through the years the influence of J S Woodsworth spread across this wide country. Grant MacNeil said "He made you feel that you were on his side, and the next thing you knew, you were in there pitching."

In the matter of the need for community control of resources,

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the Labour member for Winnipeg did more than talk abstract socialist theory. As early as 1923 he urged legislation for federal control of Canada's waterpower sites as an essential means for their conservation and development in the best interests of the whole country. He instanced the Lake of the Woods which feeds the Winnipeg River, source of power for his own city of Winnipeg. But the Lake of the Woods in turn is fed by many streams and bodies of water, and "If one attempts to exploit one waterfall there is danger that another waterfall may be interfered with. If one raises the levels of certain lakes, it may have a serious effect hundreds of miles away."

Recognizing waterpower sites as top resources in the coming industrial development of the country, he introduced in 1926 a motion making specific mention of both waterpower and coal mines and urging public ownership of these and other natural resources. He foresaw that

"The control of electric power means the control of the entire industrial life of the people, for with the rapid advance of electrical service it will not be long until every industry, every public utility, every farm and every home will be absolutely dependent upon electric power. If power is monopolized, the nation is monopolized."

He stressed the proven benefits from the public ownership of power, inviting a comparison between the price of power on the privately-owned American side of the Niagara Bridge with that on the publicly-owned Canadian side. Such a comparison was a demonstration that public ownership serves the community rather than the private investor. And he showed that the price of the private company was about three times that of the public one.

The steady growth of the public ownership of waterpower sites on this continent of privately-owned corporations in so many other fields is a steadily growing demonstration of the validity of what J. S. Woodsworth tried to accomplish that

session a quarter of a century ago and failed, because he was so far ahead of his time.

As was shown by his spider-web chart, he saw finance as the super-monopoly that controls all the other monopolies of the country and through them the lives of the people. But Father was never tempted to believe that control of finance was enough, he saw it only as a vital step toward control of physical resources. The tight, interlocking control exercised by a relatively few individuals over finance, industry and various key institutions was always in the forefront of his thinking, and he tried by giving actual examples to rouse Parliament and the public to the need for breaking the tightening stranglehold. Over and over again he explained that what had begun a generation ago as the initiative of a few driving individuals had now reached the stage where a few giant corporations held the people of the country in thrall.

During discussion on the Bank Act in 1923 he gave as an example the directorate of Canada's most powerful bank. Most of these men were leading industrialists, they included Sir Charles Gordon, president of Dominion Textiles, Lieut-Col Herbert Molson of Molson's Brewery, His Honour Henry Cockshutt who, besides heading the well known farm implement firm was Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, E. W. Beatty, president of the C.P.R., General Sir Arthur Currie, president of McGill University, Sir Lomer Gouin, Minister of Justice in the Federal Cabinet. The Labour member did not give a complete list of the industrial and other connections of these and the other directors of the Bank, but he gave quite enough detail to prove his point. And that bank was only one of the giants whose reach extended to the uttermost limits of Canada and beyond.

While the House was still a bit stunned by the implications of these facts, J. S. Woodsworth commented

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"A few weeks ago the member for Cape Breton South and Richmond objected to the mayor of Glace Bay having taken action officially in connection with some trouble there because he was a labour man. It was implied by the hon. gentleman that a man connected with the labour movement could not dispassionately perform his duties as mayor. Now if that is true, I am not quite sure how the Minister of Justice or any other member of the Cabinet can adequately perform his duties when he is so closely connected with the big financial and industrial corporations."

He paused, but there was no answering comment from the Government benches.

This was just the beginning of the long, hard fight in Parliament against the monopoly of the big banking institutions. It was a fight into which the members of the Ginger Group threw themselves unreservedly. In 1924 the charters of the banks came up for revision as they did every ten years. A special committee was appointed to study the matter and report back to the House. Four Alberta members of the Ginger Group were included on this committee which studied the financial situation from every conceivable angle. By the end of the twenties some of the members had come to regard finance as the overshadowing issue of modern society. Unwittingly, by focusing public opinion in Alberta almost exclusively on the banking system, they were preparing the way for Aberhart and Social Credit.

But J. S. Woodsworth continued to associate the need for controlling finance with the need for controlling natural resources and productive machinery. This could be done, he was convinced, only by public ownership of wide sectors. Even as he had moved for public ownership in natural resources and industry, he now moved in 1925

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is not in the interests of the country at large that the privilege of issuing currency and of controlling financial credit should be granted to private corporations."

The House was not prepared to adopt the motion. Indeed most of the members would have been astonished to learn that within a decade Canada would have a publicly-owned Central Bank.

At the beginning of the thirties J. S. Woodsworth played a part in helping to uncover one of the major scandals of Canadian politics—Beauharnois. A few years earlier he had tried unsuccessfully to get the Government to save the Manitoba Seven Sisters power site from falling into private hands. Ottawa had given assurance that before any action was taken the Manitoba M.P.s would be consulted. After all, the Manitoba Legislature had urged the Federal Government to grant the site to the Provincial Government to be kept in trust for the public. But in spite of everything, the Federal Government, at the request of the Manitoba Cabinet, had let Seven Sisters go to a private corporation.

Now, in 1929, it seemed that the great St. Lawrence waterway had a similar fate in store for it. In response to a question from A. A. Heaps the Prime Minister intimated that the decision about the waterway would be made by order-in-council and that the House would have nothing to say about it. In an endeavour to prevent such action, by arousing the public, J. S. Woodsworth moved that "no disposition of the natural resources under the control of the Federal Government shall be effective until ratified by Parliament." His motion produced a lengthy debate filled with interruptions and angry comment, a debate in which Mr. King suavely and definitely turned down the proposal. But members were left with the impression that trouble was brewing.

It came toward the end of the next session. One afternoon in May 1930, Robert Gardiner, dour and plain-spoken farmer from Alberta and member of the Ginger Group, moved for leave to discuss a matter of urgent public importance in connection with hydro-electric development in the St. Lawrence

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River by the Beauharnois Power Corporation and its subsidiaries. Robert Gardiner and E. J. Garland, who followed him, revealed an amazing story, the story of a giant power trust determined to steal the entire St. Lawrence waterway from the people of Canada. Ruthlessly the trust had created an over-capitalized and fraudulent company for the purpose of exploiting the public. Equipped with senators and even Government personnel, the company had put pressure on the Government of Canada. On March 8, 1929, just a few days after the Prime Minister had turned down J. S. Woodsworth's waterpower resolution, his Government, by order-in-council had approved of the plans of the Beauharnois Light, Heat and Power Corporation. In so doing, they had set aside the recommendations of Government engineers that the entire seaway should be developed as a single whole. To assent to the Beauharnois plan was to jeopardize the St. Lawrence seaway.

The two Alberta M.P.s gave facts to prove that the Company had exceeded the terms and conditions imposed upon them by the order-in-council. They wanted to know if the King Government had an agreement with the Company to turn over the whole unallocated portion of this section of the St. Lawrence to them. J. S. Woodsworth got into the debate, demanding information on a number of points. So did other members. Some might not see the necessity for public ownership, but corruption implicating the Government was something else.

It seems incredible, but the fact is that the matter got no further that session. The Minister of Public Works made a general defence of what had been done, but members knew that things were seriously wrong. However, the House was within a week of closing and in that hectic atmosphere Mr. Gardiner had to let the matter drop.

Before the House met again the King Government had been defeated at the polls and the Bennett Government was in office. Again on a May afternoon Robert Gardiner rose and moved for

leave to discuss Beauharnois. Again he reviewed the salient facts, adding that the Company was now building, without authority, a canal to take the whole flow of the St. Lawrence River. While there was yet time to save the seaway, he demanded a commission to investigate the whole matter.

Prime Minister Bennett stalled a bit, but finally agreed to appoint a parliamentary committee among whose members was Robert Gardiner. During six hot weeks the committee made sensational disclosures, while behind the scenes J. S. Woodsworth and the whole Ginger Group did all they could to help their colleague who was prying open the door of secrecy. The committee's findings amply justified all the charges he had made and added fresh facts. One was that \$864,000 had been contributed by the Beauharnois Company to the campaign funds of both Liberal and Conservative parties, with the Liberals getting the major share.

Faced by such wholesale corruption many people lost sight of the main issue entirely. In his "Week at Ottawa" article of July 31, J. S. Woodsworth explained that the charges of corruption were, after all, a side issue, "mere window-dressing." The important thing that Mr. Gardiner and those with him wished to accomplish was "the securing of this wonderful waterpower for the people instead of permitting it to go to a private corporation." But it was probably the corruption issue that made Mr. Bennett bring in two bills designed to give effect to the recommendations of the committee, chief of which was that Parliament should "take such action as may be within its power, and without prejudicing the rights of the province of Quebec, to procure the development of this project in such a manner as will best serve the people of Canada".

J. S. Woodsworth was very dubious, then and later, that either the Conservatives or the Liberals would apply legislation to actually curb the giant power interests, much less take over the power sites and develop them as public projects. But he felt that the Labour-Farmer group had rendered valuable service

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in making the facts known, a preliminary step in gaining public support for public ownership. People were overcome by a feeling of unreality when confronted by those fantastic Beauharnois revelations. Surely this couldn't happen here—in Canada! When he spoke in the House on July 31, following the tabling of the committee's report, the Winnipeg Labour member voiced that general feeling. He said:

"I have wondered as I have looked over this evidence, whether a hundred years from now, if somebody delving into the archives should discover the report of this inquiry, he might not regard it as a farce displaying the political morals of the dark age of 1931. Look at the dramatic personae! Senators, financial promoters, Deputy Ministers and other government officials, bankers, parliamentary agents—otherwise known as 'lobbyists'—barristers galore, engineers, investment brokers, chartered accountants, an ex-Prime Minister, a medical doctor. In the background, as a sort of chorus, political parties—and I may say, not a single woman in the play."

MR. BOURASSA: "The directors of one of the corporations were all women."

MR. WOODSWORTH: "Yes, women senographers—I stand corrected. I think the people of that future time might well consider that the author of such a play goes to incredible lengths and creates impossible situations."

"That a man could be a trusted member of a Government Advisory Commission, the head of an important allied executive position, a senator, the confidant of the Prime Minister of the day, and at the same time one of a gang engaged in looting the resources of the country—well, it might be considered that even in 1931 people could not have been such fools as to be so hoodwinked."

"Or another illustration. That any man could be a responsible official in a government-owned road, a Deputy Minister of the Department of Railways and Canals, and at the same time partner with the aforementioned senator in a fake company through which they milked the principal company—well really, the plot transcends the bounds of poetical licence or legitimate fiction."

Shocked as he was by the exact details of the corruption,

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

J. S. Woodsworth realized that the present system of society was full of similar cankers

"The probe is something like a drill. The committee bored down and struck oil, and the disquieting probability is that had they drilled in other places they would also have struck oil."

He reminded the House that it was Mr. Gardiner, backed up by Mr. Garland, himself and other members independent of the two major parties, who had brought this matter to the attention of the House, and added "I think it is not going too far to say that if this group had not brought the matter to the attention of the House we would have heard very little about Beauharnois."

His whole speech was a denunciation, not primarily of the individuals involved in the scandal, nor even of the scandal itself, but of the economic system which inevitably produces such wrongdoing. He was still full of his subject when the Speaker informed him that his time was up. He concluded with a sentence that has echoed down the years

"My closing warning is that capitalism is on trial and that democratic institutions are on trial."

## CHAPTER XVIII

# "I REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE . . . IN WAR"

**I** FIND myself somewhat in a dilemma. Let me confess that as an individual I refuse to participate in or to assist in war, and yet I am a citizen of a country that still relies upon force, and as a public representative I must vote on alternative military policies. Under these conditions in the actual world of affairs, one must try to hold to his own convictions and keep ultimate objectives in view, and yet advocate measures which are recognized as merely ameliorative. One must accept half a loaf, or even support procedures which, though repugnant to one's principles, represent a real advance in public welfare and public morals."

The House of Commons was listening, as it had done so many times before, while J. S. Woodsworth outlined his position on war and peace. It was June, 1936, that fateful year when the world passed decisively from the post-war to the pre-war period. Here was the dilemma of a man who, as a convinced pacifist, must repudiate all war yet who, as a public representative, must choose between military alternatives. Although he never fully recognized it in words, he faced here a deep and unresolved contradiction in his own philosophy, a contradiction which must be clearly understood if one is to understand his thinking on foreign policy.

On the one hand, he was a man of action, eager for positive policies in a drifting world, on the other, he was an absolute pacifist, unalterably opposed to any course which might lead to war. In every other phase of life he was willing to compromise with existing reality in order to secure the half-loaf

## *J. S. Woodsworth*

for his fellows; in this one phase alone, he felt that the cost of compromise was too great, even when he realized that the world was drifting into war. During the thirties the increasing gravity of the situation brought from him increasingly urgent demands for action to prevent war before it was too late. Yet, at the same time, the growing danger of war forced him to reject every measure that might have restrained aggression because he feared lest its very effectiveness might provoke the aggressor to armed conflict.

In the vast storehouse of J. S. Woodsworth's speeches on international affairs, both in the House and on the public platform, one seeks for a concise summary of his views. Perhaps it was in the House, in the 1935 session, that he outlined them with the greatest brevity and clearness.

"First, I believe that military force is stupid, that it settles nothing and that it creates serious trouble. This conviction may be the result of Christian idealism, but it is confirmed by a study of psychology and a reading of history.

"Second, I believe that among the many causes of war the economic are the most fundamental especially in modern times. Capitalism, social injustice, imperialistic expansion and war are inseparable. In my judgment war will not end until we destroy capitalism, with its social injustice and imperialism.

"Third, as a born individualist and an inheritor of pioneer traditions, I have an instinctive desire to keep myself and my country out of the troubles of other people. In this I think I am a fairly typical Canadian.

"Fourth, as a student of our complex industrial and social structure I realize that no individual can live to himself, or that no nation can live to itself. Self-sufficiency, independence, sovereignty and isolationism belong to the past. I would emphasize that the mere declaration of neutrality is not enough. As I tried to point out the other evening, military defence does not seem to me to be an adequate defence. However, I do not think that mere disarmament will settle our problems.

"Fifth, in practice, political power with its military force is still

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largely in the hands of the predatory classes, hence national and international policies are dominated by anything but idealistic motives.

"Sixth, as an individual I refuse to participate or to assist in war, yet I am a citizen of a country which still relies upon force and as a public representative I must vote on alternative military policies."

In that statement J. S. Woodsworth summed up most of the major points in his thinking about war and peace. During the years he repeated them often in much the same words as the last sentence illustrates. Undoubtedly his pacifism was rooted in Christian teaching and moral idealism which he accepted as absolute rules for his daily conduct, as the whole story of his life makes clear. Although he always rejected the word "pacifist" as applied to himself, holding it too passive a term to express his active search for peace, it was nevertheless a straight pacifist position he took when final choice had to be made.

Two other roots reinforced the central one. There was the isolationism which prior to 1939, was the position of most North Americans. He himself remarked that "in this I think I am a fairly typical Canadian." There was also the socialist analysis of the causes of war, made prior to the First World War and undergoing revision only with the rise of fascism during the thirties, a revision which his pacifism could not accept. In a man of J. S. Woodsworth's stubborn will and moral courage, such roots nourished a pacifism which was unshakable and which over-shadowed every other consideration.

But his summary reveals the deep contradiction. He pointed out that we live in a changing society, a society where mere negative resistance to evil is not enough, where there must be positive action for good. He knew that in to-day's world there can be no such thing as independent action. "Self-sufficiency, independence, sovereignty and isolationism belong to the past; the mere declaration of neutrality is not enough . . . military defence does not seem to me to be an adequate defence . . . however, I do not think that mere disarmament will settle our

problems." Yet, at the same time, while he knew that there must be concerted action to settle these problems, his pacifism demanded the right of self-determination.

What then did he advocate? He looked around the world and saw the nations "in the hands of the predatory classes, armed to the teeth." He saw a League of Nations dominated by the great powers. He felt that nothing but war could grow from such soil. His only recourse was to state and re-state his own belief in the futility and wickedness of war, with the hope that in time individuals and nations would come to accept it.

Long before his parliamentary years ended with his death, he had profoundly affected the thinking of both House and public on nearly every matter he brought forward. He was to see ideas which they had considered hopelessly visionary embodied into the laws and the life of the country. But in this one vital issue of pacifism as the practical alternative to war he was unable to gain general acceptance. People everywhere came to recognize his sincerity and to regard his views with profound respect, but relatively few were satisfied with the solution he offered. This was the lonely place in his life. He had come to believe so profoundly himself in what he termed "the limitations and dangers of physical force" that it grieved him to find those who shared his other beliefs drawing back, unconvinced, from this one.

#### DISARMAMENT

From the walls of his office in the Parliament Buildings the picture of four men kept J. S. Woodsworth in daily communion with their spirit. They were Keir Hardie, the first British socialist M.P., Eugene V. Debs, the American socialist, E. D. Morel, the British writer, and Ramsay MacDonald. All four were pacifists who had suffered for their convictions. On the day Ramsay MacDonald betrayed British Labour to the Tories, my father took down his picture. Agnes Macphail, whose photograph also graced his room, tells of coming into the office and

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seeing the evidence of lost leadership. She made some remark, at which my father warned her to be careful of her own conduct, lest he be obliged to accord the same treatment to her picture.

She was his staunch ally in his battles for Canadian disarmament which began with his election in 1921. Mention has already been made of his regular opposition to the military estimates each session, of his argument against the establishment of a Defence Department, of his opposition to spending money on cadet training which, "though it may be camouflaged as physical training, has as its object essentially the development of what is called patriotism but which, in the mouth of its exponents is another word for militarism."

While he pressed for disarmament at home, J. S. Woodsworth was also concerned that Canada should work for it internationally. During the twenties, while the various disarmament conferences were in session and the various peace pacts being signed, he was continually pressing the Government for information which it appeared either unwilling or unable to give. Because only a handful of M. P.'s showed any interest whatever in foreign policy, the Government was under no pressure to clarify its own position. When in 1928 it placed a resolution before Parliament to approve the multilateral treaty for the renunciation of war which had just been signed at Paris, my father commented that he hoped not to be cynical but that world events certainly looked far from bright to him. Ten years ago the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League had included undertakings for a general reduction and limitation of armaments. Germany had been the only nation to honour them. Since the Locarno Conference, British and Italian armaments had been increased. No, things didn't look hopeful for peace.

In the twenties it seemed quite logical for those opposed to imperialism to say as he did "Let us ask ourselves against whom we propose to defend ourselves?" He surveyed the world scene. The United States was a friendly nation. Europe? Defeat

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had crippled our late enemies there. The Orient? Surely there was no threat from that quarter. In sum, it seemed only wisdom to conclude that Canada had no need for military defences. But during the thirties, as the new war situation sharpened and as more people began to grope for a workable system of collective security, J. S. Woodsworth's arguments for Canadian disarmament appeared less and less consistent with the conception of collective responsibility among the nations. Opposed as he was to all military force, he frequently argued that Canada need have no fear of aggression because we lived in the shadow of the military might of the United States. He said in the House on January 25, 1937:

"Canada as a nation does not stand in any immediate danger. The United States is our only powerful neighbour, and she, I feel quite sure, will not make any military attack upon us. In fact those who rely on military force may rest assured that the United States would resist outside aggression upon us, and that for her own sake. Some may feel that we should not be under obligations of this kind. On the other hand, let me ask: Why should we not take advantage of the position in which we find ourselves on this continent? If I live in an area of fireproof buildings, why should I not be happy in enjoying greater immunity from fire hazard?"

This concept of a Canada enjoying secure isolation, thanks to the military power of the United States, falls strangely on to-day's ears. Most people accept the idea that every country has an obligation to share in building collective security against military aggression. Everyone knows that isolation is no longer possible for any part of the earth. The inventions of science, the fast-moving events of the last half century, have driven home to us the fact that we live in a world where trouble in one spot shakes the fabric of the whole, just as J. S. Woodsworth's spiderweb chart used to illustrate within the country. He knew that it was equally true internationally, but the implications of that fact clashed with his pacifism, and came off second best.

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He strove constantly for Canada's complete independence of Great Britain in foreign policy. Realizing how the events leading up to the First World War had been shrouded in secret diplomacy, he feared always lest new entanglements were in the making that would drag Canada into another of Britain's wars. He worked for the Canadian Government to make a categorical statement that this country would remain neutral in any future war, no matter what the circumstances might be. Sometimes he limited this to a demand that such a declaration should reserve to Canada the right to declare for either war or peace, though obviously only the latter alternative existed for him. He asked the House in the 1936 session

"What of our British Empire connections? Personally I thank highly of Great Britain. I am not sure but that spiritually I am more at home in England than in Canada. But I don't believe in modern imperialism, German imperialism, French imperialism or British imperialism."

MR. TOM RAN: "Or Russian imperialism?"

MR. WOODSWORTH: "No, nor in Russian imperialism. I do not believe that Canada should be involved in British wars."

For him, all wars without exception were imperialist wars. He was opposed to all war and to any connection that threatened war. For this reason he was always half-hearted about the British Commonwealth. In such an arrangement the good that came from nations and peoples learning to work together harmoniously was more than outweighed by the increased danger of war through the wider contacts.

### REPARATIONS

Very early in his parliamentary career J. S. Woodsworth initiated a debate which caused angry comment in both the House and the press. In the 1923 session he moved that Canada forgo reparations from Germany. It wasn't many years before Canada had to adopt his far-sighted suggestion, not for Germany's sake but for her own. The only way reparations could

be paid, it was discovered, was in goods, and a flood of goods into the victor countries meant unemployment and depression for them.

But in his speech my father scarcely mentioned the economic factors involved. His whole case was built on a moral issue—the belief that Germany was not solely responsible for the war, but that Canada and the other Allies shared her guilt. For three-quarters of an hour he built up a devastating indictment, quoting war leaders like Lloyd George and ex-Premier Nitti of Italy, to support his claims. He exposed the network of secret diplomacy and tore to shreds the contention that the Treaty of Versailles was the just punishment of a guilty nation, imposed by blameless victors. "Our claims under the Treaty of Versailles are contrary to international law as international law was understood before the war," he declared. He concluded his speech with an appeal that the best monument to those who had died in the war would be for us to carry out the spirit of the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses."

Feelings ran high in the House, for he had stirred up sore memories and emotions, and disturbed the comforting justification that all the wrongdoing had been on the side of the enemy. One Conservative used angry phrases to strike back at arguments for which he had no answer, talking about the Labour member's "red revolutionary friends in Germany", "the spotless Bolsheviks of Russia", "that peculiar group of economic freaks to which he belongs", and so on. But it was noteworthy that no one was able to challenge J. S. Woodsworth's facts. Before long the future was to make necessary the course which he had urged.

#### WAR PROFITS

From his first session my father protested against profits being made from war. For him the interest charges on the huge war debt were millstones hung about the necks of men, women and children of this and future generations, interest charges

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going in large part to those who had already made swollen fortunes from war profiteering. Declaring that if it were right to conscript men for war, it was also right to conscript wealth, he proposed a capital levy to wipe out or reduce the war debt. He argued that conscription of wealth might prove an effective means of discouraging future wars. The House, however, was cold to the proposal.

Later on, in 1934, when Europe was re-arming on a large scale and when Japan's war on China was assuming ugly proportions, the Winnipeg member remarked that it was easy for Canada to protest against armaments, but that if we were sincere, we ourselves should do something about it. Canada had an almost complete world monopoly of nickel. He urged that the Government take over control of the export of nickel, or better still, make nickel-mining a government monopoly. A few days later he introduced a motion urging the Government to ban the export of nickel for war purposes and to request the League of Nations to set up "machinery for controlling the manufacture of armaments by private companies and the exchange of raw materials used in the manufacture of armaments." There was a debate on the resolution, but that was all.

After the formation of the CCF, he had the support of a group of able debaters, all of them keenly interested in preventing the shipment of war materials to the fascist countries, then re-arming at a formidable rate. They kept the issue constantly before Parliament and the country, demanding an embargo. It was eventually imposed, but not before the 1939 session when my father once more attacked the steady shipment of scrap iron and nickel from Canada to Japan and Germany. "Is this to go on?" he demanded. "Are profits to continue being made from shipments to possible future enemies? Why not stop the shipments now? For the life of me I cannot see why any private manufacturer should be allowed to make any profit out of war munitions."

J. S. Woodsworth's attitude to the League of Nations was another example of the warring elements in his stand on foreign policy. In the early years he was very lukewarm if not actually hostile to it. Later, as the world situation worsened and the need for international measures became increasingly urgent, he kept demanding that the League take action. But when he came to fear that the proposed action might lead to war, he drew back. Finally, when he saw that lack of support from the nations had weakened the League to the point of futility, he could only redouble his efforts to ensure that, as he said in 1937, "if war comes, Canada at least may not be in it."

He first discussed the League of Nations in the House in 1923 when he quoted a statement very critical of it from an "irresponsible body" (the Senate?). He commented that if Canadians of standing felt this way about the League, "we should very carefully scrutinize its operations before deciding to continue our membership therein." He was convinced of the need for a "league of peoples", but certain inherent characteristics prevented the present League from being truly international. Certain nations were not admitted (at that time Russia and Germany). The Constitution could not be readily amended. The Assembly was not democratically chosen. The Council was not responsible to the Assembly. And the men who had formed the League were those who had also framed "the iniquitous Treaty of Versailles".

Two years later he discussed these doubts in greater detail. It was one-thirty in the morning, the morning of the last day of the session. The fact that this had been the only opportunity during that entire session to discuss the League speaks volumes as to the lack of interest in foreign policy on the part of the House. The item under discussion was a vote of \$163,656.38, being Canada's contribution toward maintaining the Permanent Secretariat of the League. J. S. Woodsworth stated his recogni-

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tion that a large percentage of the Canadian people were not particularly interested in the League, adding his own belief that "as at present constituted, the League of Nations can be given only a very qualified support." He went on

"First of all, as at present constituted, the League affords no guarantee of peace. In view of the very prominent position which the United States occupies to-day because of her financial and industrial importance in the world it would seem as if no organization such as the League could ever carry out the work for which it was originally intended without the inclusion of the United States . . .

"I would urge further that not only Germany be included in the League, but also Russia. Decidedly we cannot hope to re-establish peace conditions on a permanent basis in Europe unless the great country of Russia is included. . .

"I would urge that we should take our part, together with other forward looking nations and together with the progressive sections of our own Empire, in asking that the League should include in the near future, not merely the allied nations, but all the nations of the world as was the original intention. It is only on that basis that the League can be made effective."

It was far into the night before the House wound its weary way to bed and the session itself passed into history. Seven years were to pass before J. S. Woodsworth again discussed the League of Nations in Parliament.

Meanwhile, he lost no occasion to press for closer relations between Canada and other countries. He had urged repeatedly from 1923 onward that Canada should recognize Soviet Russia and resume trade relations with her. Indeed, when a trade mission came from Soviet Russia to interview Canadian authorities with the vain hope of establishing trade relations, the members called upon J. S. Woodsworth as the one parliamentarian whom they knew to be in favour of such relations. Chicherin and several less well-known members of the delegation left their signed photographs with him.

That was in the middle twenties. In the fall of 1931 my

parents visited the Soviet Union, and, the following February, my father summed up his position in regard to that country

"May I point out that the two countries, Canada and Russia, differ entirely in their history and in the psychology of their peoples. So no one proposes that we introduce exactly the policies that they have in operation in Russia, or that we follow exactly the same line of procedure . . . The vital thing is that they have a plan ahead of them, they are working towards that plan and they are enthusiastic about it."

And in November of the same year, with Canada deep in depression, he urged trade with Russia

"We might very well place ourselves in such a relationship to Russia that she might send us some of her surplus goods which we need, and that we might in return export some of our capital goods which she needs at the present time. I think such a transaction would be beneficial to both of us."

With the treaties had come depression in Europe too, and the rise of fascism. The League of Nations proved helpless to stem the thrust of aggression in Manchuria, in Ethiopia, in Spain. Discussing Canada's relationship with the League in 1935, J. S. Woodsworth explained his lack of enthusiasm for it

"I confess that for a number of years I took very little interest in the work of the League of Nations. The League of Nations was essentially a league of victors. Further, it has been essentially a league of capitalist nations, and as one who believes that capitalism must be done away with, I cannot be expected to take a very lively interest in policies that are essentially founded on capitalism."

And in 1936

"I cannot think that any of us have taken the League very seriously. Certainly the great powers have not. We talk of our obligations under the League, but one of those obligations is disarmament. I cannot get excited over the action that Germany has taken in entering the Rhineland. Germany disarmed conditionally. We of the Allied side refused to adhere to our solemn obligations to disarm. Again we blame Italy for what she has done. I think



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Italy is blameworthy, but we ourselves have failed to keep obligations to which we were bound under the League. Let me say that the removal of the causes of war or any real effort to do so has not been seriously attempted."

By 1937 he was convinced that the League was done for.

"I submit that the League as constituted has failed. I am not talking about the League as it should be. In more recent years I have endeavoured to do all that I could for the League, because it is the only instrument we have.

"I urge that Canada should work for a League in which each nation would be willing to surrender its sovereignty and its individual armaments, that is, in very simple terms, the right to do as it pleases, and in the last resort, the power to enforce its own decision . . .

"Let me suggest that collective security should be more than a phrase. If we are to have collective security insured by armaments, then those armaments must be collective armaments. If we are to have security by other and more peaceful means, then there must be collective agreements."

In 1938 he urged more strongly the need for a new League.

"Specifically with regard to the League, I would suggest that although it has been a miserable failure, we must try to build up slowly and painfully a reconstructed League. Nations must surrender what they now regard as their sovereignty." But a few sentences later, the basic contradiction revealed itself as he added "We must claim our right to be neutral."

That J. S. Woodsworth, perhaps unknown even to himself, had little faith in the workability of any League of Nations is shown by this passage from his speech of June 23, 1936.

"In a decently-organized society we would not need a police force. In the present semi-barbarous civilization, I prefer a police force to bandits and vigilantes. So, in international affairs, until war is actually repudiated as an instrument of international policy, an international police force, under proper control, if indeed that is possible, might be preferable to world anarchy."

He felt that, hedged about with all possible safeguards, an

international police force might be preferable to a lawless world. But he was lukewarm about it even then, and doubted the feasibility of establishing such a force lest its very existence add to the ever-present danger of war.

#### SANCTIONS

It is doubtful that J. S. Woodsworth would ever have consented to any actual measure of law-enforcement by the League of Nations. His attitude to the imposition of League sanctions, an attitude undoubtedly shared by most Canadians during the thirties, is clear proof that his fears lest coercion might provoke aggressors to war were stronger than his hopes that League action might avert conflict. In 1932, when Japan's war against China was causing world concern, my father was indignant that Canada, as a member of the League, was doing nothing to stop the conflict.

On May 25 he quoted the League Covenant to prove that Canada was committed to severing "all trade and financial relations" with any League member who resorted to war in disregard of its covenants. He felt that Canada had not taken the stand she should have taken in face of Japan's aggression. The following exchange with the Prime Minister is illuminating.

MR. BANNETT "Might I ask the hon. gentleman does he consider Canada has any armed force with which to carry out the sanctions that are involved?"

MR. WOODSWORTH "We might have used certain sanctions. I am well aware that economic sanctions in the Far East have been regarded by Japan as equivalent to war. I do not know, however, that that is generally recognized in international affairs, and I think that there could have been certain economic sanctions taken that would not have involved war."

MR. BANNETT "When I am asked, as each one of us is asked, why this country did not take a more leading part in the matter, I think all I have to do is to refer to the terms of the League itself, to examine the sanctions which are provided and to ask myself this

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question "Would you, in a position of responsibility, accept what is involved in endeavouring to put these sanctions into force against either China or Japan? For my own part, I confess I would not."

J. S. Woodsworth was silent. A few years later he too declared against sanctions, this time sanctions against Italy in her war on Ethiopia. Speaking on June 18, 1936, he said:

"But I reaffirm the position I took at the League of Nations meeting last November [to which the Government had sent him as a temporary collaborator] . . . that without seeking to alter conditions, some of which I have described, I believe that sanctions might become worse than useless. . . . Under the present set-up sanctions have failed. . . . Finally I urge that the Canadian delegates to the League should be instructed not merely to give up any part in sanctions, but as provided for by Article 19 of the Covenant, further to press for a policy in which an effort will be made not simply to prevent aggression but to remove those causes of international friction which almost inevitably lead to war."

Once again he felt that the immediate situation was too dangerous to be dealt with vigorously, taking refuge instead in long-range policies. But the contradiction in his thinking still pursued him, and in 1939 he was to protest: "From my standpoint the conquest of Ethiopia was one of the most shameful chapters in recent history." He declared, "I cannot feel proud of my country when I realize that she is weakly following the lead of other nations and acquiescing in such an arrangement as this [the recognition of Italy's conquest]."

Time and again his fear of war operated against his urge to prevent aggression. He did not protest against the Canadian embargo which prevented the Loyalist Government of Spain securing arms to defend the people against fascist conquest, though it was his question in the House of Commons that elicited the information that the embargo had been lifted, after Franco's victory. In 1938 Prime Minister King made it known that the Canadian Government was following the same "non-

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intervention" policy in Japan's war on China, a policy which resulted in Japan getting the armaments. My father rose

"May I ask the Prime Minister if we have not signed solemn treaties under which we obligate ourselves to go to the help of a country that is being attacked?"

The Minister of Justice replied with a question. "Does my hon. friend advocate Canada taking part in that war?" My father's reply was cautious. "I did not advocate that. I advocated refusing to give assistance to an aggressor nation that is mercilessly attacking another nation."

It was the Munich crisis that revealed J. S. Woodsworth's dilemma most sharply. For months he had been condemning the "blandering" policies of the Chamberlain Government. In February 1938 he suggested at a meeting of the CCF National Council that a wire be sent to Clement Attlee, leader of the Labour Opposition in the British House of Commons. He helped to draft the following, which was approved by the Council and signed by himself as House Leader and M. J. Coldwell as CCF National Chairman:

"Large numbers of Canadians deeply shocked by recent developments in British Government's foreign policy which entirely disregard interests of Dominions and betray democracy. We look confidently to the Labour Party to champion genuine collective security and constructive peace policy."

On October 11, 1938 the *Calgary Daily Herald* reported a meeting in the city that day where the CCF leader had outlined his views on the international situation. The report began "Chamberlain did the only thing he could have done," stated J. S. Woodsworth. It went on to give his analysis of the background of Munich. He was attacked at once on the basis of that first sentence. A month later, in the CCF *People's Weekly*, an Alberta paper, he explained that the sentence had been torn out of context. He continued

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"I had given a rather full analysis of the Czechoslovakian situation; shown how the League had been flouted by the great nations, shown how Chamberlain had blundered. Then when we faced the outbreak of a world war, I said that when he had managed to get himself into this jam, it seemed to me that Chamberlain had done about the only thing left for him to do. Of course it is conceivable that Hitler may have been bluffing, that Mussolini might not have gone to his help—something unknown might have arisen. But in the hour of desperate crisis it did seem as if the choice was between the claims of the Sudeten Germans—and war! To be thankful that war was at least postponed is not to endorse Chamberlain's policy nor to renounce the principle of collective security."

Yes, when it came to the immediate hour of crisis, J. S. Woodsworth's actual policy was to keep Canada out of war. Even postponement might allow for "something unknown" to arise. He had put this policy into his own words when he addressed the House on January 25, 1937:

"As I see the matter, there are two cardinal principles that should underlie Canadian foreign policy. The first is to keep out of war—I think I could almost add 'at any cost'. The second is that we must seek to remove the causes of war."

But even as late as March 30, 1939, he could not bear to abandon the idea of action to deal with the coming war. He realized that perhaps his convictions were "more akin to a religious faith than to a political programme", yet he felt that somehow they must become embodied in the practical politics of his day. He said:

"Even at this late hour some other way out must be found. . . I urge collective peace action among as many nations as can be induced to come in, including of course the United States. I think that, even at this late date, Canada, small nation as she is, ought to take some steps to throw her influence for the re-establishment of something in the nature of the League of Nations."

But the sands had almost run out. Canadians were at last being forced to face the grim reality of a world where isolation

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is no longer possible. A choice was inevitable and the moment for decision could no longer be postponed. Would the nations allow the peoples of the world to be dragged, one by one, under the tank-treads of the dictators? Or would they, at this eleventh hour, move together to stop further aggression and preserve some hope for the future? Either course meant war at this stage. The first might mean another reprieve, but inevitable disaster waited at the end of the road. The second meant immediate war, but it offered some hope that eventually the world might resume the process of building a better civilization.

These were the thoughts in the minds of J. S. Woodsworth's colleagues as they listened to his words in the House of Commons that spring day in 1939. They, too, had struggled to prevent the coming war. But as the attack on China had been followed by assaults on Ethiopia, Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia, they had been forced step by step to the conclusion that only collective military action by the rest of the world could stop the aggression.

## CHAPTER XIX

# A NEW APPROACH TO POLITICS

IT has been said that until the advent of the Labour members the Parliament of Britain was a gentlemen's club. In Canada life was a bit more practical, but until Labour and Farmer groups were elected in 1921, Parliament was the unquestioned preserve of business interests. In those days Parliament was a leisurely, part-time job. For a few months each year the members attended the session at Ottawa, those in the central provinces managing long week-ends at home. When Parliament closed, they turned to their own affairs, attending to constituency affairs as a side-line. Only at election time was any effort made to discuss party policy with the electors, and then the atmosphere was one calculated to generate heat rather than light.

From the beginning, J. S. Woodsworth vigorously challenged this whole conception of parliamentary life. In his eyes the responsibility of representing the people in the House of Commons called for a member's full-time year-round energies. To represent one riding well, he was convinced that a member must know conditions across the country and indeed throughout the world. Of course he himself represented much more than the riding of Winaupeg North Centre. The people there had elected him, but somehow his boundaries widened out until the whole of Canada became his constituency. For twenty years he represented a growing section of the Canadian community from coast to coast, people who needed his help, and people who agreed with his basic ideas.

He kept in touch with his vast constituency through many channels. There were his speeches in the House of Commons

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which were widely reported by the press. Then he bought thousands of copies of *Harvard* reprints of them, sowing these broadcast across Canada. He addressed the envelopes himself in longhand, pressing into service members of the family and any volunteers who could be found. He sent out the various papers, pamphlets, government reports, indeed anything that came to his desk, to every part of the country. He felt the loneliness of people in isolated districts, hungry for reading-matter and human contact. Sometimes he appeared to lack discrimination when he would send a bulletin on fisheries to some old lady he had met years before in a prairie town, or a periodical about an obscure Chinese college to a lumber-worker in the woods of northern Ontario. But often he would be rewarded by a grateful letter from someone who had been started on the road to community service by his mailed contributions, and the letters that often accompanied them, or by a visit from someone who had been encouraged to persevere in a worth-while task by reading reports of his speeches in the House of Commons. He had an abiding faith in the power of knowledge to bring reinforcements to his cause.

His correspondence was heavy. Many of the letters he answered himself, in longhand, though he was able to use the full services of an excellent stenographer during the session. He looked after his files himself, constantly clearing out letters as he finished with the matters involved, a process which destroyed a great volume of correspondence which would have been of intense interest to later readers. Visitors to Room 616, his office in the Parliament Buildings, were legion, and they came to see him about everything under the sun. He would deal first with their particular problems and then talk to them of his own aspirations, hoping to enlist their support. He usually managed to arouse their enthusiasm, though often, of course, it was a temporary transfusion of his own idealism.

Somehow he found time to lead study and discussion groups, in Ottawa during the session, in Winnipeg after Parliament

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closed. It was in such groups that many of those who, in future years, would give direction to the CCF and to many other movements, caught their first spark from his burning zeal. He could make any group feel as though he and they were embarked together on high adventure, and those who had once shared the experience could never forget it. He might be weary when he came to meet with people, but he seemed to draw strength from them while he gave them leadership, and he came away invigorated.

Through the years he kept up a series of weekly articles for labour, farm, and other sympathetic papers from coast to coast, describing events in Parliament, not formally as to strangers, but with a wealth of detail and flashes of humour as though he were writing to absent friends or members of the family.

Then there were the meetings. As soon as Parliament closed or a recess was called or even over week-ends, he was off on the road or more frequently the railroad, his worn little club-bag in one hand, a square leather case filled with pamphlets or Hansard reprints in the other. Sometimes, too, he carried the equipment for setting up his charts, its resemblance to a golf-bag giving a wholly deceptive appearance of a man on vacation. He travelled across Canada times without number, using his parliamentary railway pass, stopping off at way points wherever there was an opportunity of meeting people. Angus MacInnis once remarked: "If J. S. heard of three Eskimos in the Arctic Circle who wanted a meeting, he'd be off to them on the next train!" That this was scarcely an exaggeration, is attested by the fact that during his twenty years in Parliament, J. S. Woodsworth addressed an average of 150 meetings annually, rising to the peak of 212 in 1932, the year the CCF was launched.

Throughout his life he had no use for patronage. No supporter or constituent had the slightest hope of getting special favours from the member for Winnipeg North Centre.

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The idea of using his position as a member of Parliament in this way was abhorrent to him. Besides, as he explained, keeping clear of patronage gave him freedom to speak his mind. He was equally careful to see that Parliament was not used to confer special privileges on anyone.

Consequently he was on the alert one day in 1929 when Prime Minister King introduced to the House an item to provide an annuity for the widow of a prominent public figure who had died a quarter of a century before. First to protest against the proposed pension was A. A. Heaps. Then J. S. Woodsworth rose to object on the ground that it was dangerous to single out individuals for special treatment of this kind. He noted that no details about the case were being given to the House. How different when the affairs of old people were investigated before a regular old age pension was granted! In the absence of information, he said, he must oppose this pension. A number of other members did likewise and the item was dropped.

Years later it was discovered that the Prime Minister, unable to get Parliament to grant the lady a pension, had placed her on the staff of a department of government. She had no training for her duties there, nor did she acquire training. But she was on the payroll and received the regular salary increases. It is many years now since she has appeared for work, but as this is written, she is still on the staff and her regular salary cheque is still being mailed to her.

If J. S. Woodsworth were still in the House he would doubtless have continued his protest against anyone being given special favours. But he was not one to go looking for patronage cases or exposing the details of petty graft.

Did he ever take time out to play? He loved walking, either alone or in company, when the flow of his ideas was fully as much a part of his enjoyment as the scenery or the exercise. He was fond of rambling through the woods or along mountain trails, especially if there were berry-picking or some other

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purposeful activity connected with the expedition. He enjoyed a quick dip in lake or ocean, though the idea of sunning himself on the beach in his bathing suit probably never occurred to him. But, after his days of college football were over, his life crowded out practically all forms of organized sports or games.

Agnes Macphail tells a story which well illustrates his later attitude to formal recreation. One day, feeling that J. S. needed a change, Ted Garland and Bill Irvine got him out on the golf course. Meeting him later, Agnes Macphail asked how he had enjoyed the game. He said he had had a good time walking round the course, it had been sunny and the breeze was very pleasant. He always enjoyed tramping about in the fresh air, he declared, and then added, "The only thing I didn't like was having to bother trying to hit that little ball."

People were his greatest relaxation. In the day coach—he always travelled day coach or tourist—he would find himself opposite some mother with a small child for whom he made a paper tea-kettle or a sailor hat, listening the while to the problems of the mother. The railway workers all knew him, and a conductor or brakeman would often drop down beside him for a chat or invite him forward to the baggage car to meet some of the other men. Even now it is practically impossible to find a prairie town where someone does not recall the time Mr. Woodsworth spoke at the farmers' picnic or the bitter sub-zero night when he filled the arena.

He was completely at home wherever he found himself. He would seat himself in some farm kitchen and talk to the woman while she worked, often picking up a tea towel and drying the dishes as they chatted. He always regretted his inability to speak French and tried to give his children the opportunity he had missed. My first six months in Ottawa were spent as a day boarder in the French-speaking classes of a convent. My youngest brother, Howard, had one long summer in Quebec province on a farm where only French was spoken.

Children loved my father, for he was full of stories and little

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games and had a remarkable ability to enter into their interests as well as to bring them into his. Everyone, child or grown-up, found him a good listener. Everyone, the West Coast fisherman, the Cape Breton miner, and anyone in between, found that he had a surprising amount of information about their particular problems, and a deep faith that they, on their part, were ready to help in the common task of building a better society. It was this assumption that everyone shared his idealism that gave J. S. Woodsworth his greatest influence over people.

Any attempt to list the groups he addressed over the years would be hopeless, but here is a brief sampling to show its catholicity: the C.P.R. workers in the Winnipeg shops, the Jewish socialists in Montreal, the Winnipeg General Hospital nurses, the Toronto Labour Party, Canadian Clubs, a convention of Women's Institutes in Ontario, the Cape Breton miners, May Day rallies in various cities, the United Farm Women of Canada (Saskatchewan), the Ottawa B'nai B'rith, the Burnaby branch of the Canadian Legion, the Ottawa Normal School, the Calgary Unemployed, a group of Montreal social service workers, the Schreiber Indian School, the Winnipeg Junior Anglican clergy, the East York Workers, the Ottawa Street Railwaymen's Association, the Toronto Typographical Workers, the Winnipeg Spiritualist Church, a Toronto Armenian group, student groups of many kinds, a number of United Church congregations, a group of Montreal bankers, the Vancouver Native Sons, the Ottawa University Women's Club, service groups of various sorts, the Winnipeg Peace Study group—the list seems endless.

He knew Canada and he knew his fellow-Canadians as very few men of his generation knew them. It is understandable that in the 1925 session, following the usual conventional optimism of the Speech from the Throne, he remarked

"I should like to suggest to this House, as I have done before, that as we gather together in the comfortable surroundings of this

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Chamber and discuss general principles and statistics, we are very far removed indeed from the great masses of the people of Canada."

It is even more understandable that, on the same sort of occasion in the fall of 1932, having watched the body-and-soul-destroying effects of the depression on thousands of his fellow-Canadians, he declared with even greater intensity

"I would seriously suggest that the Prime Minister and the other Ministers be forced to spend some six months of each year going in and out among the people until they find out what the condition of the people really is and what the people are thinking. They seem to be so isolated from the life of the common people that they have no conception whatever of actual conditions."

While large sections of the Canadian people were becoming convinced of the need of a government with a new social outlook, while economic conditions were ripening to make the creation of a new political movement possible, the nucleus of such a force had already been formed in Parliament. We have seen how, from the beginning, the Labour members found it possible to co-operate with a group of the Progressives on a number of specific issues, particularly those having to do with the control of finance and the extension of social welfare measures such as old age pensions.

In these moves for co-operation it was J. S. Woodsworth who took the initiative, indeed, it was a motion of his that had much to do with separating the Ginger Group from the bulk of farm members who sat with the Progressives but thought with the Liberals. It was in April, 1924, that my father moved an amendment to the Budget, urging the reduction of the tariff on goods of most concern to the consumers. His amendment was almost identical with the one presented a year earlier by Robert Forke, leader of the Progressives, and it was directly in line with the programme on which the Farmers had been elected. Its seconder was J. T. Shaw, one of the Alberta Progressives.

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The Labour member's amendment proved highly disconcerting to all three major parties. If it passed, it would amount to a vote of lack of confidence in the Liberal Government in any case it was sharp criticism of the Liberal Party which had always prided itself on being the party of no tariff or low tariff. It had shut out the amendment that the Conservatives would most certainly have proposed and forced them to vote for either the Liberal Budget or the Woodsworth Shaw amendment, both of which they heartily detested. It put the Progressives squarely on the spot. The upshot was that the amendment was defeated by 204 votes to 16, the great majority of the Progressives voting with the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Farmers tried to justify their vote by saying that they could not have assumed responsibility for defeating the Government but the press was not slow to point out that as the Conservatives were even more strongly opposed to the amendment than to the Budget, the Government had been in no way imperilled. The vote revealed the fact that the great majority of the Progressives were Liberals at heart and had found their way home.

The press, particularly the farm press, was not slow to realize the significance of this vote. They saw that the thirteen Farm members who had supported the amendment had been the only ones to stick by the programme of the Farmers. They realized, too, that the Labour members wanted the same programme, at least on a number of important points. The *Montreal Star* of June 9 reported the vote as evidence of a new grouping of the Progressives in Parliament, noting that some of them were more in sympathy with the Labour Party than with any other group in Parliament, and adding the information "Last week they held an informal caucus together." The *Financial Post* of July 18 was among the first to use the term "Ginger Group."

It is interesting that J. S. Woodsworth did not yet think in terms of formal party organization. Following an address at the Labor Church in Winnipeg, he was reported by the *Tribune* of July 28, 1924, as saying

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"No, we are not going to found a new party. We are going to co-operate, and we have found out by actual experience that we can co-operate very closely. We have voted practically solidly during the past three years. I see quite a future before this group."

And so, throughout the twenties, the "Co-operating Groups" kept on learning to work together. It was by no means easy, for there were strong-minded individuals involved and wide differences in background and philosophy. Sometimes one of the Farmers would become impatient over supporting an issue which seemed unduly important to Labour. Sometimes one of the Labour men would object to the great emphasis the Farmers placed on finance. Sometimes the informal caucus almost broke up over some deadlock, almost, but not quite.

A story is told of one such meeting where the members had become weary after long discussion without reaching agreement on some contentious point. Bill Irvine rose in hasty wrath. "What's the use of churning rotten buttermilk?" he demanded. J. S. Woodsworth got up quickly from the Chair. "If that kind of language is going to be used, I'm not going to stay!" he exclaimed. "Go! Go!" shouted Bill Irvine in exasperation. Upon which my father, with great dignity and greater firmness resumed his seat. Bill Irvine apologized for his outburst and the caucus settled down to work once more. "The Non-Co-operating Groups," as he had dubbed them on a similar occasion, had surmounted another crisis.

From these years of close association came mutual tolerance and mutual understanding. Gradually the areas of agreement widened, as Labour and Farmer members came to see each other's point of view and the point of view of the people they represented back home. Slowly there developed a whole range of matters which both groups regarded as vitally important for the well being of the Canadian community. The nucleus was ready for the building of the new political movement.

With the thirties came depression and misery on a scale

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unprecedented in this country. Over the years J. S. Woodsworth and others had kept telling the House of the poor conditions under which many groups of Canadians had to live and trying to get the Government to give a lead in helping these people to help themselves. Now they redoubled their efforts to secure action from a government whose only policy appeared to be that of hopefully waiting for prosperity to appear from round the corner. Farm and Labour members tried to get the administration to realize that this was no ordinary slump, describing the depression in terms of a national calamity like a fire or a flood. On the western prairies drought had been added to the other troubles of the farmers, adding in turn to the unemployment which stalked the streets of the cities.

With the opening of the 1931 session, J. S. Woodsworth, in an effort to picture the magnitude of the disaster and the imperative necessity for government leadership, read the headlines on the front page of the *Manitoba Free Press* as they appeared the day he left Winnipeg to come to Parliament.

POLICE WIELD BATONS ON PARADERS' HEADS TO QUELL DISORDER  
EXCITING CLASHES MARK PROCESSION OF 4,000 UNEMPLOYED  
AND COMMUNISTS

MINOR CLASHES MARK JOBLESS GATHERING

DOMINION-WIDE UNEMPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATIONS CHECKED  
BY POLICE

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF PROBLEM IS GRAFFLED WITH  
BY LEGISLATION

BRACKEN'S BILL TO RAFTY PROJECTS TO AID WORKLESS GETS  
THIRD READING

TIME WEALTHY WERE FULLY AWARE OF PRESENT SITUATION  
DECLARES HAIN

RUSSIA MAKES TRADE PROPOSAL TO CANADA

UNITED FARMERS OF CANADA CONVENTION REMOVES LAST  
BARRIER TO POLITICAL ACTION

## *A New Approach to Politics*

BY OVERWHELMING VOTE, DELEGATES WIFE OUT BUILDING  
OBJECTING TO POLITICAL ALLIANCES

CHARTER OF LIBERTY WITH EXCEPTION OF THREAT OF SECESSION  
IS ADOPTED

A single day's headlines! A tremendous story of human misery and social upheaval, forecasting change and new approaches to the problem of government in this country. Having quoted the latest serious unemployment figures for his own city and contrasted them with the huge profits shown by great eastern corporations, the Winnipeg Labour member went on to a detailed survey of conditions among western farmers.

"Take the tremendous drop in wheat prices from January 1930 of \$1.39 a bushel to the November 1930 price of 60 cents. The earning power of an acre of wheat in Saskatchewan was \$20.40 in 1925, while in 1930, six years later, it was only \$6.92."

Tirelessly that session my father made similar speeches, quoting the press, letters, relief agencies. He told of mounting unemployment, of men clubbed by the police when they gathered to demand work, of farmers having to sell eggs for six cents a dozen and fifteen cents a pound, of Glace Bay miners cut to three days' work and less, each week, with wages cut accordingly.

The next session it was the same. He told how in February the relief rates in Winnipeg had been cut from \$3.49 a week to \$3 a week for food for a small family, less than five cents a meal for the whole family. "In the parliamentary restaurant," he remarked, "we have to pay 75 cents or \$1 a meal"—and the contrast in living-standards between the people and their M.P.s stood out in glaring relief at his words. Again, referring to Winnipeg

"It has been found that in some 1,500 homes a child is expected within the next few weeks. These homes have been able to provide nothing whatever for the care of the baby when it arrives, and the good women of Winnipeg are setting about making some

effort to provide some infants' outfits in order that the babies may be wrapped in something when they are born."

He told of one family in his constituency, typical of many the man a skilled mechanic, unemployed for months and now ill, the wife a woman of ability and culture; there were seven children. The entire family was being supported by the city with food, fuel, light and water, even with a small payment to the mortgage company to prevent foreclosure. But he had seen something else in his visit to that home, something which filled him with foreboding "In that home there were four boys, out of school, sitting hour after hour, day after day, week after week, and month after month, with absolutely nothing to do."

There was a fall session in 1932. J S Woodsworth commented on the barrenness of the Government's programme as set forth in the Speech from the Throne

"Look at the following," he declared, referring to the Speech - 'The acuteness of the depression is past' 'approaching prosperity' - 'the strength of our financial structure', and 'improved conditions'. Since the Prime Minister believes that the depression is fundamentally psychological, I presume that he may be pardoned for his professional optimism. but I would say that although he may be free to take that position in a professional sort of way, to me it seems intolerable that he, a wealthy man, should proceed with evangelistic fervour and unctuous phrases to lecture the poor people on the spiritual advantages of their poverty. The Prime Minister says 'We have no desire to undermine that high courage, that resourcefulness and ability of our citizens to emerge out of difficulties strengthened by trials as by fire.' "

And my father quoted an item taken from a Montreal newspaper

"This week at Cap aux Oas, Gaspé county, a little girl eight years old fainted in school. The teacher took her in charge and when she came to, asked her if it were customary for her to have fainting spells. The little girl opened her eyes and replied 'No, but it was my turn to go without breakfast this morning.' "

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Over and over again, stories of misery and hopelessness that roused the pity and anger of one who had spent his life that people might live more fully. In spirit he became one with the Old Testament prophets when his denunciation and warning resounded through the Chamber.

"Sometimes in the quiet hours I have heard the horses of revolt come galloping and galloping and galloping and I have felt constrained to add the words of the Scripture to what I have already given.

'Go to, now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you . . . Ye have laid up great treasures in the last days . . . Ye have lived delicately on the earth and taken your pleasure.'"

It was on March 2, 1932, that J. S. Woodsworth first moved a formal resolution proposing the establishment in Canada of a Co-operative Commonwealth. The resolution read:

"Whereas under our present economic arrangement, large numbers of our people are unemployed and without the means of earning a livelihood for themselves and their dependants,

"And whereas the prevalence of the present depression throughout the world indicates fundamental defects in the existing economic system;

"Be it therefore resolved that, in the opinion of this House, the Government should immediately take measures looking to the setting up of a co-operative commonwealth in which all natural resources and the socially-necessary machinery of production will be used in the interests of the people and not for the benefit of a few."

The Labour member's speech in support of this resolution was a thorough analysis of the capitalist system of production and why it failed to function in the interests of the majority of the people. It was a reasoned plea for working out a new system in which the motive of production would be the meeting of people's needs and not the making of private profits. His concluding paragraph shows his step-by-step approach to socialism, with popular control strengthening at every step.

"The question may be asked Will such a plan work? That can be determined only by trial. What I want to point out is that the present system is not working and that the onus of proof rests upon the apologists for the present system. What I want to do is to urge upon the House that we give serious consideration to developing another system. I do not say that this can be done overnight, but every time we develop the co-operative principle in industry, we go one step toward bringing about a co-operative commonwealth; every time we allow public ownership to replace private ownership and to be operated under democratic auspices, we take another step toward a co-operative commonwealth; every time we allow more authority and control to be given to employees, we come one step nearer a co-operative commonwealth. Every time we take wealth from the superwealthy and thus make a more equitable distribution, we are bringing about a more stable state of affairs and are taking a step toward the co-operative commonwealth."

My father and the other Labour and Farmer members hoped for an extended debate on this resolution, but only three other men got a chance to speak on it—two Conservatives and Angus MacInnis. The debate was adjourned and, according to the rules of the House, slid down to the bottom of the Order Paper and was not reached again that session. It would be debated again the following year. By that time there would be an organization in being called the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. While apologists for the status quo watched with satisfaction the burial of the resolution deep down in the Commons Order Paper, the birth of the CCF was only five months away.

## HOW THE CCF GOT STARTED

**I**T was the winter of 1932 and the long, bitter depression was at its worst. In every city from Halifax to Victoria families on relief huddled in cold houses, hungry and miserable. Men tramped the streets looking for work, becoming cynical and hopeless as the empty days dragged by. Farmers watched their prices fall to unbelievably low levels, while their debts skyrocketed and their farms passed into the hands of banks and mortgage companies. Youth rode the rods or wasted at home in idleness and frustration. For the first time in Canada large numbers of people had begun seriously to question the basis of the economic and social order.

From the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa, J. S. Woodsworth watched the mounting tide of public feeling. Caucus meetings of the "Co-operating Groups" constantly discussed the developing situation. Leaders of the unemployed came to urge action on their desperate plight, the member for North Centre Winnipeg was always available. He held conferences too with some of the young lecturers from Toronto and McGill Universities, many of them Rhodes scholars with personal knowledge of British and Continental socialist movements. All felt the need for some new political expression. All awaited the moment of decision.

It came in January. J. S. Woodsworth recognized the signal for action in the open invitation given by the United Farmers of Alberta. Meeting in convention they called upon groups of like mind to meet with them later in the year for the purpose of discussing the establishment in Canada of a co-operative commonwealth.

The summer of 1932 was an excellent time for the birth of the new political movement. Actually, four conferences ushered in its birth. On Dominion Day the Executive of the U.F.A. met in conference with its M.P.s and M.L.A.s for the purpose of giving effect to the January invitation. They issued the call to groups of like mind to meet on August 1 at Calgary.

The second conference was held in Saskatoon during the last week of July. Farm and Labour parties in Saskatchewan met for the purpose of uniting their organizations for political action in the provincial field.

For several years there had met each summer a Western Labour Conference made up of representatives of political Labour and Socialist parties in the four western provinces. The 1932 meeting had been planned for Regina, but in order to take advantage of the invitation of the U.F.A., the conference was scheduled for the last days of July, to meet in Calgary. The scene was shaping for the momentous fourth conference, the one which gave birth to the CCF.

Meanwhile, plans were proceeding in another quarter. The man destined to head the new political movement had been giving much time and thought to preparing its creation. One afternoon in May 1932 the "Co-operating Groups" met in William Irvine's office, their regular caucus room. This time they were joined by the young men from Montreal and Toronto. A year later in *Saturday Night*, Wilfrid Eggleston of the Parliamentary Press Gallery did a chumbrial sketch of the Farmer-Labour M.P.s who met that day. He wrote:

"Woodsworth is a humanitarian, Garland an advanced Liberal, Coote a financial reformer, Spencer is a disciple of the London Chamber of Commerce. Heaps is another advanced Liberal and a realist, Humphrey Mitchell is a trades union man, Lucas is a Conservative with radical leanings in two or three directions, Agnes Macphail is a militant agrarian, Luchkovich is a doubting Thomas;

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Kennedy a hard-headed sceptic; Irvine a political evangelist; MacInnis a Marxian Socialist."

In spite of their wide differences in outlook, this little fighting force in Parliament had been welded together by J. S. Woodsworth to the point where they had come to believe that it would be practicable to form a political movement in the country to achieve common social objectives. The caucus record shows that in forty minutes that May afternoon they laid plans for the formation of a "Commonwealth Party" and had chosen temporary officers: a record which in itself, reveals the thoroughness with which J. S. Woodsworth had prepared the agenda. He was the logical choice for temporary president, Agnes Macphail would organize Ontario, M. J. Coldwell (not yet in the House but president of the Saskatchewan Labour Party) would look after that province, Robert Gardiner, president of the United Farmers of Alberta, would direct organization there. All this, of course, was in preparation for the coming conference where groups of like mind with the U.F.A. would meet with that organization to discuss the establishment in Canada of a co-operative commonwealth.

J. S. Woodsworth took a prominent part in the caucus discussion, noting its decisions on a piece of House of Commons stationery. Here was another step toward realization of his dreams. But already his mind was racing ahead to the bustling difficulties of creating a political party from a veritable chaos of diversity. He knew that Canadians were essentially conservative. Plentiful resources and the luxury of isolation from other people's troubles had seen to that. But now the Great Depression had jolted thousands awake to the uncomfortable realities of the twentieth century. Now was the moment for action.

He knew that organization must be built round such live political elements as were to hand. From Ontario west bits of the yeast of change had been working for years in the vast dough of a quarter-continent, British Columbia's long tradition of

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Marxian socialism, European in origin, had been brought over by Britishers before the British Labour Party had become a major force. Labour Party ideas were represented in the West Coast province by little parties which rose and fell, and rose again under other names. Each prairie city had its similar Labour Party, autonomous and almost unaware of the existence of its neighbour. In two or three Ontario cities both Marxian and Labour Party traditions lived through a multiplicity of tiny parties, each the centre of a ring of deviationists. Quebec and the Maritimes had practically no organization.

In contrast to European experience, some of the most vigorous demand for social change came from the farmers of Canada. Depressed conditions at the end of World War I had sent the Progressives to Ottawa and farmer governments to Alberta and Ontario Legislatures. Ontario farmers, with their heritage from the Patrons of Industry, were normally very conservative, but these were not normal times. Under the stress of the depression even they had proved ready to listen to new ideas. But east of Ontario the farmers were as unreceptive from the political point of view as were the industrial workers.

He felt that a third broad group was ready for the new political party. Everywhere were idealists, men and women brought up in Christian and humanitarian traditions, people who believed that society should provide every citizen with the opportunity for self-fulfilment. Attached for the most part to no political party, these people welcomed the idea of a government pledged to improve society. They included white-collar workers of all kinds, teachers and preachers, technicians and housewives, clerks and small business men.

My father had often spoken in the universities. He knew that each had its group of students eager for social change. It was no accident that he had become the honorary president of the League for Social Reconstruction (L.S.R.) when it was formed in the winter of 1932 by some of the young lecturers to whom reference has already been made. Under the presidency of

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Professor Frank Underhill it had issued a manifesto strikingly similar in its principles to that which would come from the first national convention of the CCF. It was a socialist document, and the L.S.R. was intended as a Canadian counterpart of the British Fabian Society, contributing research and educational material for the socialist movement. Within a year there would be sixteen branches of the L.S.R. in student cities across Canada.

Marxian, Labour Party, Farmer, Idealist—such were the main ideological elements from which the new movement must be built. No socialist organization in the world had ever succeeded in combining all of them. Perhaps it was only because he knew there were idealists in each group that the tremendous task appeared possible to J. S. Woodsworth. He was the greatest idealist of all.

Canadians preserve a fairly calm exterior, but it must have been with considerable inner excitement that the Labour delegates joined the Farmer delegates in the Calgary Labor Temple on the first day of August, 1932. The time had come for the birth of the new political movement of which all of them had dreamed for years.

Western Labour and Farmer organizations were well-represented. Alberta sent a full contingent of U.F.A. strength, and there were delegates from both the Canadian Labour Party and the Dominion Labour Party. Two delegates came from the Socialist Party of Canada in British Columbia. From farther east there were representatives of the Labour Party and the United Farmers of Canada in Saskatchewan, of the Independent Labor Party of Manitoba, and from the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees with headquarters in Ottawa, came the only eastern and trade union representative, A. R. Mosher. From across Canada came representatives of the League for Social Reconstruction.

A full list of the occupations of the delegates shows a typical

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Canadian cross-section. There were fifteen farmers, twenty construction workers, two lawyers, six teachers, one miner, one professor, six housewives, three accountants, six railway workers, three journalists, two steam engineers, one hotel keeper, one retired minister, one merchant, one motion picture operator, three nurses, two union executives, twelve members of Parliament and the Legislature, nineteen unemployed men and women. Together they possessed a practical knowledge of the needs of the working people of this country.

A name for the new movement came up early for discussion. Many were proposed, including "The Socialist Party of Canada" (by Mrs Louise Lucas of Saskatchewan), "The National Party" (C M Fines, Regina), "United Workers Commonwealth" (Rice Shepherd, Edmonton), "National Workers' Federation" (Dr Alexander, Edmonton), "United Socialist Federation" (John Queen, Winnipeg), "Canadian Commonwealth Federation" (J S Woodsworth). "The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation" was suggested by two delegates, Walter Menz of Edmonton and John Fenster of Regina, the latter proposing that the words "Farmer-Labor Socialist" should appear under the name. After much discussion the last name with the suggested addition was adopted.

There was, of course, disappointment among those who had hoped for "Labour" or "Socialist" in line with British and European tradition, but most of the delegates were quick to realize that co-operation must begin with the organization's name. Later there was much criticism about its long, unwieldy nature. A typical comment was made by R T L. in *Maclean's Magazine* for February 1, 1933:

"It can hardly be said that he [J S Woodsworth] is a politician, since no politician worthy of the name would handicap a new party with a descriptive label like Co-op-er-ative Com-mon-wealth Fed-er-ation."

That was before newsmen and others, including the political enemies of the CCF, had learned to use the initial letters only,

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until they became a unit, a trademark that any advertiser might envy, so boldly does it catch the eye in a page of print and arrest the ear in a snatch of conversation.

The Resolutions Committee, chaired by M. J. Coldwell, brought in a draft programme which finally emerged from discussion as an eight-point document. The Convention decided that the points would be worked over by L.S.R. and other committees and presented as a basis for discussion to the delegates at the first CCF National Convention in 1933. Broadly the eight points covered most of the sections of that first convention's Regina Manifesto. There was, however, one striking omission. No point dealt with foreign policy, nor does there seem to have been any mention of international affairs at the Calgary Convention. In view of J. S. Woodsworth's constant preoccupation with the subject, it would be interesting to know why he did not press for its inclusion in this first document. There was, of course a full section devoted to it in the Manifesto placed before the delegates at Regina.

After considerable discussion about organization it was decided to have a council in each province to correlate the activities of member organizations, and a council at the national level. Each affiliate would pay a fee, to be split between provincial and national councils. The matter of a formal constitution was laid over for year-long consideration.

The hot August day was drawing to a close when Chairman E. J. Garland called for nominations for officers to serve until the first national convention. Again, there was only one logical choice for president—J. S. Woodsworth. He might also have been elected National Organizer for, in the next year, he would make over 200 public addresses, from Victoria, B.C. to Sydney, N.S., apart from countless interviews, heavy correspondence, newspaper reports and articles too numerous to mention, all in addition to his steady work in the House of Commons. For him Calgary was the springboard to Regina. In the year between them he was to use his energy to the last limit of reserve;

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careless of his health, he would give himself unstintingly to the movement which was the culmination of his life's work.

With him he had an executive of high-calibre men and women. The secretary was Norman F Priestley, vice-president of the U F A. The other seven members were George H. Williams, past president of the U F C, Saskatchewan Section, John Queen, M L A, Winnipeg, Mrs. B. Latham, Edmonton, A. R. Mosher, Ottawa, William Irvine, M P, Wetaskiwin, Angus MacInnis, M P, Vancouver, Mrs. Louise Lucas, president of the Women's Section of the U F C. (Saskatchewan). With the election of officers the Conference had provided for future activity. The delegates returned to their home provinces to work for the growth of the new movement, jubilant that the hopes and labours of many years had at last come to fruition. The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was on its way.

Intense activity marked the year between the Calgary and Regina Conventions, and J S Woodsworth was at the centre of it all. While organization proceeded apace in Western Canada, developments in Ontario were spectacular. Crowds flocked to CCF meetings to hear the speakers and begged to be allowed to join the movement. In the late fall a United Labour Convention of the various Ontario parties had voted to affiliate with the CCF, thus providing a channel for membership. But most people who wanted to join had no enthusiasm for belonging to these parties. They wanted to join a CCF club, an organization specifically created for the needs of the new movement. All across Canada the Labour and Socialist parties resisted the idea of setting up competitors for membership, holding that genuine converts would find their way into folds already provided. My father, who had a closer acquaintance with the psychology involved, was sympathetic to the desire for CCF clubs, but quite apart from his personal feelings, the pressure for the clubs swept everything before it.

November 30, 1932, marked the Toronto debut of the CCF

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at the largest Farmer-Labour rally in Canada's history. The attendance exceeded the wildest hopes of its organizers who had hired Hygeia Hall with misgivings because of their slim funds. A second hall was hastily secured both were jammed, with hundreds turned away. Tom Cruden, president of the Ontario section of the Socialist Party of Canada, chaired a meeting with the atmosphere of a religious service rather than a political rally. "The overwhelming majority," wrote *The Observer*, in the *Toronto Star* of December 3, "were men and women of mature age, and they sat or stood through heavy speech-making, with no relief but the collection, from eight until nearly eleven." During that time they were addressed by Agnes Macphail, Robert Gardiner, William Irvine, Dr. Salem Bland and J. S. Woodsworth. An indication of the emotional climate was Agnes Macphail's declamation that the slogan of the new movement was a ringing "Come Comrades Forward!"

J. S. Woodsworth made the main speech, declaring the CCF a socialist movement and repudiating any connection whatsoever with the Communists. Ours was a Canadian organization, he said, seeking social change by bloodless methods. Farmers and city workers had long worked together in the old parties. Now why not in a party of their own? With his usual clarity and enthusiasm he urged the need for replacing the present capitalist order by one controlled by all the people through their government.

The effect of this initial meeting was electric. Agnes Macphail had set herself the task of bringing the United Farmers of Ontario into affiliation, coming into sharp conflict with those leaders determined to keep the farmers out of politics. Now, the day after the Hygeia Hall meeting, under the magnetic spell of Agnes Macphail's oratory, the U.F.O. Convention voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with the CCF. At the same time they imposed conditions which eventually took them out again. Insistence on constituency autonomy and affiliation limited to

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the declared policies of the U.F.O., were effectively to prevent any real merger with a national party.

The Hygeia Hall rally and the U.F.O. Convention provided a feast for the Toronto newspapers. Public interest and excitement mounted daily. J. S. Woodsworth hurried around Ontario, addressing huge meetings in the cities. Within two weeks it was decided that CCF clubs must now be formed to handle the rush of new members. All across Canada the press took up the tale of the phenomenal rise of the CCF in Ontario.

Now the old-line political parties began to take alarm. Mr. Bennett's speech urging all good Canadians to apply "the iron beel of ruthlessness" to both Communism and Socialism had been made early in November. In spite of CCF repudiation of Communism, press and politicians accused the new movement of being linked with Moscow. Said the *Toronto Telegram* editorially on December 9:

"The Co-operative Commonwealth's Federation is the euphonious name under which it has been thought well by its sponsors to disguise the Socialist Party of Canada. The chairman of the recent meeting [in Hygeia Hall] declares that it is cheap politics to associate the movement with Moscow. But Mr. Cruden should realize that he is only the tail of the animal. The horns and hooves are J. S. Woodsworth, M.P."

In face of such melodrama the real reason for political alarm went almost unnoticed, except by the old-line party leaders. They had begun to realize that the public was no longer in a mood to wait. That party would win the next federal election who would most convincingly promise social security measures. The growing strength of the CCF during the next three years would have much to do with Mr. Bennett's New Deal, Mr. King's Reform Programme, and Mr. Stevens' Reconstruction Party. J. S. Woodsworth was not slow to point out that the existence of the CCF had already popularized the idea that the Government's job was to assure the well-being of the least of its

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citizens. *Laissez-faire* was on its way to join the dodo and the Welfare State was on its way in \*

A *Toronto Telegram* cartoon of the period shows Bennett and King, side by side in the doorway of the Parliament Buildings, kicking high in the air as Woodsworth rolled in the manuscript of his Co-operative Commonwealth resolution, while the Prime Minister exclaims "This is one time we are both kickin' t'other instead of each other." The occasion was the discussion of the resolution in Parliament which, the previous year, had caused so little stir. Now, in the 1933 session, there was lively debate, members of the old parties joining to attack the new one and its social philosophy. But, as E. C. Buchanan, president of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, wrote in *Saturday Night* for March 11:

"Obviously the great majority of the House would be opposed to it [the resolution], but the opposition took the form of reasoned examination and argument, not of contemptuous dismissal. The manner in which it was met might well be regarded by Mr. Woodsworth and his associates as recognition of their new party and its policy in the political orientation of the country."

In less polished but equally vigorous language *The Canadian Veteran* wrote:

"Hark! The herald angels sing  
There isn't much hope for Mackenzie King,  
Nor is there rest for R. B. Bennett—  
He'd better locate a seat in the Senate,  
Since very much to their consternation  
Along comes the C. C. Federation."

While all this public activity and comment were proceeding, J. S. Woodsworth kept in close touch with the committees preparing for the first national convention. In the task of preparing a draft programme, the leading members of the L. S. R. quickly acquired the label of the "CCF Brain Trust." Indeed, the movement owes a tremendous debt to these brilliant men whose

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average age was in the early thirties. Among the most active were Graham Spry, editor of the Ontario farmers' *Weekly Sun*, J. King Gordon, professor of Christian Ethics in the United College at Montreal, Frank R. Scott, professor of constitutional law at McGill, and, older than the rest, Frank Underhill, professor of history at Toronto. Writing in 1951, F. R. Scott paid particular tribute to the work of Professor Underhill

"But it was that acute critic of Canadian politics, that most Shavian of the Canadian Fabians, F. H. Underhill, who alone in the recesses of his Muskoka retreat, produced the first complete draft of the Manifesto, in the early summer of 1933. This was revised by other members of the L.S.R., and then gone over by the National Executive of the CCF, before being submitted to the Regina Convention."

Even before it reached the Convention, the Regina Manifesto was the co-operative work of many minds, the minds of men who were to give years to active service as CCF members and officers. Some of them lost their academic positions as a result of their connection with the movement. All of them were profoundly influenced by the personality of J. S. Woodsworth.

Many factors influenced the choice of Regina for the first CCF national convention, perhaps the decisive one being that — it represented the geographical centre of the movement's strength across Canada. There were no funds to pay delegates' expenses. The fact that 131 managed to get there and stay there for a three-day convention spoke volumes for the ingenuity and devotion of the delegates themselves and the organizations back home who had scraped together the nickels and dimes for the trip. Some people arrived by train, many in the hot day-coaches after several days' travel. Some rattled down from the mountain passes or up from the Ontario countryside in old cars. Others rumbled across the dusty prairies in "Bennett buggies." Some came by the box-car route or thumbed their way. Had all these people foreseen that eleven years later their convention city

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would become the seat of the first CCF government in Canada, it would have heartened them, it could scarcely have added to their sense of serious purpose.

A hush fell over the assembly as J. S. Woodsworth rose to make his presidential address, a declaration of faith which stands as one of the landmarks of Canadian political history. In simple, concise language he laid down unmistakably the lines that a socialist party must follow in this country and the reasons for them. Many of his assertions caused controversy among the delegates, but all of them won acceptance by large majorities when the Manifesto was considered. Some of his convictions are not yet fully understood. But the undeniable fact is that the CCF is finding its way into the trail he blazed with such forethought that July day in 1933.

Having first expressed the opinion that the importance of this convention to Canadians would overshadow that of the much heralded World Economic Conference then in session, he went on to sketch the background of the new movement.

"The CCF," he declared, "is essentially a drawing together of the common people. The more intelligent and aggressive members of the Labour movement have rather prided themselves on being 'class-conscious', but too often they have been only group-conscious and even then their ideas were projected from a mental background quite divorced from Canadian realities. Trade unionism in itself has been found inadequate. In a country not predominantly industrial a labour party could not unaided hope to obtain power. Further, technological and financial developments demand the adoption of new ideas, new types of organization and a new technique.

"The Canadian farmers have inherited an individualistic tradition and formed such a homogeneous bloc that it has been difficult for them to realize their new and wider social relationship. Gradually they have been drawn into the capitalist machine, and with the depression have found themselves almost as helpless as the city workers. Their efforts at co-operation have been haulted by the big interests. Thus from their own angle they have come to recognize the ruthlessness of the capitalist system.

"The small business men and the clerical and professional groups, living in a period of expansion and almost boundless opportunities, have been largely dominated by the ideals of big business. They had considered themselves the leaders in the community life. Now, however, their complacency is gone. The more thoughtful among them are realizing that the only hope for them and for their children lies in the establishment of a new social order.

"All of these groups have found a place in the CCF. There lies ahead of us the great task of overcoming prejudices, of gaining an understanding of one another's problems and of mobilizing our forces for the common good."

In a few thought-packed sentences he analysed the nature of the movement required, a movement born of protest, yes, but one which to be effective must develop a positive programme based on a positive philosophy, a programme constantly changing to meet the changing times.

"Thanks to the pioneers in the Socialist and Co-operative movements, we have at least the fundamental principles on which we may base our teaching with regard to the Co-operative Commonwealth. We do not believe in unchanging social dogma. Society is not static. Knowledge grows, and each age must work out a new and higher synthesis. Such growing knowledge is dependent upon experience and action. Each new development, each new member of our organization should mean a fuller content in our body of Socialist doctrine."

Old-line socialists, accustomed to long-honoured doctrine expressed in its original phraseology, began to be vaguely disturbed about the genuineness of this new conception of socialism. But worse was to follow.

"Undoubtedly we should profit by the experience of other nations and other times, but personally I believe that we in Canada must work out our own salvation in our own way. Socialism has so many variations that we hesitate to use the class name. Utopian Socialism and Christian Socialism, Marxian Socialism and Fabianism, the Latin type, the German type, the Russian type—why not a Canadian type?"

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It was at this point that a small but aggressive minority of old-timers took mental issue with J. S. Woodsworth, the man who dared to distinguish between types of Socialism. Surely there could be only one kind and that kind could come about only in the way foreseen by Marx and Engels. The job of a true Socialist must be to spread the teachings of these men and prepare people for the collapse of Capitalism which must surely come some day, suddenly, as a result of its own inherent rottenness. This business of building a political party might be all right from a propaganda standpoint, but it could do nothing to alter the course of destiny. Yet here was J. S. Woodsworth uttering such idealistic heresy and adding jingoism to it.

"Perhaps it is because I am a Canadian of several generations, and have inherited the individualism common to all born on the American continent, yet with political and social ideals profoundly influenced by British traditions and so-called Christian idealism, further, with a rather wide and intimate knowledge of the various sections of the Canadian people—in any case, I am convinced that we may develop in Canada a distinctive type of Socialism. I refuse to follow slavishly the British model or the American model or the Russian model. We in Canada will solve our problems along our own lines. We have a goodly heritage, not only in natural resources but in pioneer traditions and social equipment. If we have the spirit of our fathers we can overcome the difficulties even of our modern complex world."

The constant recurrence of the word "Socialism" was a worry to another group of delegates, mainly newcomers from the city clubs, though there were those in the Ontario farm delegation who disliked and feared it as well. Later on, during discussion on the draft programme, there would be wide clashes, not only on the use of this one word, but also over the attempts of old-time Socialists to put Marxian language into the document. But the great body of delegates was in substantial agreement with J. S. Woodsworth's insistence that in this country Socialism must

grow from the traditions and resources of the Canadian people themselves.

Now came another fundamental point which gave rise to heated debate during discussion on the draft programme. The president declared

"The CCF advocates peaceful and orderly methods. In this we distinguish ourselves sharply from the Communist Party which envisages the new social order as being ushered in by violent upheaval and the establishment of a dictatorship. The decision as to how capitalism will be overthrown may of course not lie in our hands. Continued bungling and exploitation, callous disregard of the needs and sufferings of the people, and the exercise of repressive measures, may bring either a collapse or riots, or both. But in Canada we believe it possible to avoid chaos and bloodshed which in some countries have characterized economic and social revolutions."

J. S. Woodsworth was convinced that the means used condition the ends reached, and he was adamant in his belief that only peaceful change could lead to a peaceful and just society. A small minority of delegates tried to have the matter of means left open in the Manifesto, but the overwhelming majority insisted on the inclusion of the unequivocal sentence: "We do not believe in change by violence."

At this first convention the outlawed Communist Party under another name sought to enlist CCF co-operation in a programme of mass demonstrations to liberate Tim Buck and other "class prisoners." The Convention firmly declined the invitation, making clear its agreement with J. S. Woodsworth that political action through Parliament would be far more certain to secure the repeal of Section 98 under which the Communists had been put in jail. It would be ten years before the Communists finally gave up their attempts to force a "united front" with the CCF. By that time the last vestige of CCF organization had become convinced that only constitutional, orderly change could build a better society. But the leader

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of the CCF had long believed what he said at the Convention in 1933

" 'Democracy'—the rule of the people—is a much discounted word. Little wonder. The democracy which we have known in this country has been government of the people by party machines for the profiteers. The parliamentary machine is antiquated and its procedure obsolete. Government has functioned largely in the interests of the exploiting classes. The untrained masses are quite unfitted to pass judgment on the complicated problems that face modern executives. But having said this, I must confess that I still believe that the will of the people should prevail. This may appear a hangover from the high-sounding but empty doctrine of Liberalism. But fundamentally it is sound. An intelligent and alert citizenship is the only guarantee of freedom. Attempted short cuts, however alluring, offer no real solution."

So it was that, when the delegates came to debate the methods of transferring the various natural resources, industries and services to social ownership, the influence of J. S. Woodsworth was strongly on the side of compensating the present owners and using taxation to bring their resulting income to an equitable amount—the method successfully used by the British Labour Government after it came to power in 1945. There were those who held that, as such means of wealth had been taken by a few from the whole community, no compensation should be given. But the great majority insisted on writing into the Regina Manifesto the words, "we do not propose any policy of outright confiscation." Again, ends and means were considered inseparable.

The next section of the presidential address dealt with the growth of the CCF movement to date. Critics would later point out that one fundamental weakness of the new party was its lack of central control and discipline. That its leader was not greatly concerned about this matter is shown by his brief reference to it

"Some attention must probably be paid to discipline. While there should be abundant room for individual initiative, we cannot

afford to allow irresponsible individuals to act in the name of the CCF. So with regard to policy. Without overriding personal judgment, we should strive to reach unanimity at least on essentials." Nor was he worried about the financing of the new party. All his life he had done what he felt he should do, and somehow the money had come to make it possible. Once again he showed his faith that a way would be found for a worthy cause. Indeed, his reference to finance was the only bit of humour in his whole address.

"Finances, perhaps, have been our weakest spot. Talk of 'financing on a shoe-string'! We began without a dollar—and we have almost held our own! We have had what money could not buy—self-sacrificing service and boundless enthusiasm, a realization that we are working in a great cause and that each must do his bit. That spirit has carried us further than could a big budget."

Briefly, as part of the general organization survey, he reported his own full year's work, and then came to his final words.

"You have given us new hope"—such was the thanks that came at the close of one of our meetings from a muddle-aged, toil-worn woman. "You have given us new hope"—no greater tribute could have been paid! But what a heavy responsibility is laid upon the CCF! We think of the strength and the financial resources of the opposing forces, of the smallness of our own group, of the constitutional difficulties, of the popular ignorance and apathy, and we feel like exclaiming: 'Who is sufficient for these things?'

"Yet we are confident that we are in the line of progress—that time and tide are with us. If our movement is to be successful it must bear—as we think it does—something of the character of a religious crusade. Only thus can we overcome the danger of being swayed by personal ambition or by the hope of immediate success. Only thus can we rally the masses to struggle for a better future for themselves and their children.

"Before us lies a great opportunity. May we be equal to our task!"

With this dedication, the delegates settled down to the big job of drafting the Regina Manifesto. It had to be discussed section

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by section, sentence by sentence, almost word by word. J. S. Woodsworth's speech had already raised most of the points of controversy. Here was the first test of the new movement's ability to reconcile differences, to create unity from diversity, with the vote of the majority as the final arbiter. If, in the main, provincial delegations sat together, there were ideological alliances superseding even geography. Farmers from all provinces had objectives and traditions in common. Marxists from British Columbia worked with similar elements from the prairies and Ontario, delegates from CCF clubs became impatient with sectarianism from any quarter, while advancing heterogeneous ideas of their own. The will to co-operate was strong, but the habit of co-operation in a political movement had yet to be acquired. And the delegates were determined not to compromise their principles.

J. S. Woodsworth's tremendous ability to work with people rose to its greatest height at this Convention. He sensed perfectly the uneasy mixture of unified purpose and differing background, and he set himself the task of achieving a harmonious whole. Like a persuasive father, he dominated the Convention without appearing to do so, constantly explaining the reason for differences of viewpoint and phrase, mediating the hot words of debate, opening the way for new solutions, and when compromise was impossible, taking his stand clearly and influencing others by his example. He knew these men and women as he knew the members of his own family, he felt that, no matter how much they might differ, they were still in basic agreement. His faith was justified by the eventual adoption of the Manifesto with one dissenting voice, that of an Ontario farmer and Progressive M.P., who clung tenaciously to constituency autonomy and several other ideas which appeared to him incompatible with the programme of the new movement.

And so the Regina Manifesto became at once the declaration of First Principles and the first political programme of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Through the years it has

been a working guide for its elected representatives in all fields and for its members in the many facets of their community and private life. It was along the lines of the Regina Manifesto that the CCF Government of Saskatchewan proceeded to demonstrate that socialist measures were eminently practicable in Canada. And it has provided a storehouse of ideas from which other Canadian governments have drawn the legislation of the past twenty years that is gradually moulding the public conception that the business of government is to do for people those things they need, but which they cannot do as unorganized individuals. If certain sections of the Regina Manifesto have become outdated, it is precisely because the pressure of events has forced those in power to adopt those very measures which were far ahead of their time in 1933. Meanwhile, succeeding CCF conventions have moved ahead to break fresh ground in the movement's programme.

J. S. Woodsworth, elected CCF National President at that first convention, would live to see only some of these changes brought about. But, with the patience and optimism of a great leader, he looked far beyond his own generation. Changes such as he envisaged would take time, for they could be brought about only by the intelligent co-operation of the people. But he knew that once made, such changes would become a permanent part of the Canadian tradition and would, in turn, serve as a solid foundation for future progress.

## CHAPTER XXI

### PARTY LEADER

FOR the last ten years of his life J. S. Woodsworth was the uncontested leader of a national political party, being unanimously acclaimed by the seven successive CCF national conventions that met during that period. But party leadership failed to change his way of living, it merely intensified it. There were more meetings, more interviews, more correspondence, a tremendous drain on his vital energy when his worn body was giving repeated warnings that the years had taken their toll. During these last years his nasal trouble increased, high blood pressure caused almost complete loss of sight in one eye, distressing lapses of memory became more and more frequent. To him these symptoms emphasized that his time was shortening and that there was still much to do. His recognition of failing health redoubled his determination to undertake responsibility that would have appalled most men in the prime of life.

As party leader he remained essentially the prophet and teacher. In earlier years he had shown himself a capable administrator, but now he left the problems of party organization to those he considered better-fitted to handle them, while he used to the full his outstanding ability to win people to his ideas. Always an intense individualist himself, accepting no decision save that of his own conscience, he had no wish to regiment others. It is doubtful whether he ever saw himself as the leader of a future government, and even more doubtful whether he would have been happy in such a vision. His was the role of preparing the way. A *Canadian Forum* editorial six months before the federal election of 1935, described the

impression which my father and the parliamentary CCF group made upon many people at that time.

"With a few exceptions, its [the CCF's] political leaders lack the administrative capacity which would be so essential for carrying through their plans of wide government control. Furthermore, many of them have not yet weaned themselves from the point of view of the South West corner of the House. There they performed a spirited task of opposition, but Mr Woodsworth and many of his colleagues have never really envisaged themselves actively and aggressively as a potential government. The CCF's day may come, but from present indications it will not come in 1935."

The years following the birth of the new movement bristled with the problems attending the infancy of any organization. There were the difficulties of knitting together so many personalities, all of them strong individualists. My father was adept at handling that sort of problem. On one occasion a newcomer to the CCF arrived from British Columbia with complaints about "your son-in-law, Angus MacInnis" and his opposition to making monetary reform the sole programme of the movement. In reply to a request for an interview to discuss this grievance, the CCF leader promptly invited the complainant to lunch with Angus MacInnis and me. No more was heard of the trouble, either at the lunch or later! My father counted on sincerity and good will to overcome initial intolerance, and his presence had the effect of dwarfing difficulties by emphasizing fundamental agreement.

More serious troubles were caused from outside by those alien to CCF ideals who were ambitious to turn the growing vigour and mass appeal of the new movement to their own ends. First and most persistent in this was the Communist Party under its various names and guises. Ten years before the birth of the CCF, its leader had come to a full understanding of the unbridgeable gulf between democratic socialism and the Communist Party, but it was to take almost another ten years for the CCF movement itself to become proof against the ingenious

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approaches of this destroyer cloaked in friendship. Many honest and guideless CCF members found it hard to believe that lying and deceit could be the deliberate strategy of fellow-Canadians.

Repulsed at the first national CCF convention, as we have seen, the Communists were quick to enlist the sympathy of newcomers to the CCF who were also new to the ways of the Communist Party and the implications of its methods. Pressure for co-operation with the Communists grew apace until it became a threat to the unity of the new movement and to its effectiveness. Finally a public incident in Toronto forced J. S. Woodsworth to take action. Here is the story in his own words as it appeared in a Canadian Press despatch in February 1934:

"At the Regina Convention held last summer it was decided that the CCF would not co-operate with the Canadian Labour Defence League. Notwithstanding this, some members of the CCF Clubs and the Ontario Labour Conference persisted in associating themselves with Communist tactics.

"The matter came to a head a few days ago when certain individuals claiming to be supporters of the CCF appeared on the platform at Massey Hall when A. E. Smith [Communist leader] stated that representatives of the CCF in the House of Commons are responsible for the charge of sedition laid against him as they suggested to the Bennett Government that by means of a charge of this nature they could dispose of their political enemies and not have to resort to Section 98 of the Criminal Code.

"In view of this situation the four Labour members of the House called upon the provincial president of the CCF, Miss Agnes Macphail, to take immediate steps to rid the CCF of individuals not in sympathy with its programme and not loyal to the decisions of the constituted authorities.

"Neither the Labour parties nor other groups in the CCF propose to allow a few Communist sympathizers to discredit or disrupt the movement."

In the brevity of a press despatch, the CCF leader felt no need for denying the charges made by the Communist head. His long years of fighting to protect the civil liberties of even

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those who sought to destroy him and his movement were the best form of denial. When the Ontario CCF Council proved powerless to handle the disrupters, J. S. Woodsworth dissolved it. Following the expulsion of those persons and groups insistent on co-operation with the Communists, the Ontario section was reorganized.

But much harm had been done. The United Farmers of Ontario, whose affiliation with the CCF had always been conditional, withdrew in hasty alarm, deciding once more to retreat from direct political action in favour of a return to the Conspectus policy of lobbying the old-line governments. Across Canada there was a general chill among people unaccustomed to ideological strife and unaware of the time and effort necessary to build a movement like the CCF.

The attitude of the Roman Catholic hierarchy was interesting at this time. My father had many good friends among adherents of this church, and his own solid opposition to Communist doctrines and methods was widely known, not only among lay members but among Church authorities. In August 1933 an article was published in the *Montreal Beacon* with the approval of His Excellency the Archbishop of Montreal and the endorsement of all the English-speaking priests. Entitled "A Catholic Can Join the CCF", the article examined the newly adopted Regina Manifesto in detail, concluding that its philosophy and aims were such that Roman Catholics in good standing might join the new party. But now, on the very day that the CCF leader made his first move against the Communists in the Ontario section, the Archbishop of Montreal issued a public warning to Roman Catholics against "subversive political theories", condemning the CCF as a dangerous organization bordering on Socialism, and asserting that "Socialism will always be the precursor of Communism". A few weeks later this was followed by a pastoral letter emphasizing the warning.

For J. S. Woodsworth there was only one way to meet all this fear and misunderstanding. He proceeded on the even

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tenor of his way, trusting that time and growing knowledge would produce maturity within the organization and confidence outside it. As years passed, he was to see CCF strength growing among all sections, including Ontario farmers and French-speaking Roman Catholics.

But for years the Communists continued their tactics of penetration into the CCF, seeking to fasten themselves like fungus growths to the healthy trunk of this Canadian tree. They were never successful for long in any one attempt. Always they recognized in J. S. Woodsworth their most influential opponent, and always they were frustrated in trying to discredit him among his followers. I was a witness of perhaps their final attempt to intimidate him. It happened in my parents' home in Winnipeg during the summer of 1937 when the national convention met in that city. Tim Buck, then Communist leader, came to see my father who invited Mother and me to be present for the interview. Mr. Buck pressed the need for unity between his party and ours, asserting that the rank-and-file of both organizations were determined to achieve it. My father detailed the reasons why such unity was quite impossible from the CCF standpoint. After some argument, Tim Buck looked directly at him and said, "Then, Mr. Woodsworth, as leader of the CCF, you must go." The interview was over. But when J. S. Woodsworth died, he was still the leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and the influence of the Communists was less within that movement than at any time since its formation.

The years following the formation of the CCF saw a whole spate of elections, with J. S. Woodsworth in the thick of them. Success at the polls gave him a sense of quiet elation, defeat merely meant that people were not yet quite ready for the programme of the CCF. The process of winning men's minds to new ideas was bound to take time, but he was confident that once a person had seen the vision of a better society as a real

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possibility, there would be no slipping back. Following the Ontario provincial election in 1937, a contest in which the CCF had little success, my father sent a post-election message to the *New Commonwealth*

"If we are to be worthy of victory we must learn to fight, even in the face of sure defeat" In parenthesis he added "I do not think I should qualify that by saying 'temporary' or 'apparent', though I believe our defeats are both temporary and apparent."

His spirit was unquenchable. He felt himself among the "goodly company" of those who from the beginning of time have worked for causes which move from sure defeat to ultimate victory. As the Ontario CCF paper remarked editorially in 1937 "Himself careless of personal recognition, Mr. Woodsworth has never lost sight of the tremendous and enduring importance of the work on which he is engaged." Defeat for him merely meant victory postponed.

In its first election contests the CCF did surprisingly well. A provincial election in British Columbia in the fall of 1933 had made the CCF the Official Opposition, with seven seats and 31% of the popular vote. Saskatchewan's first provincial contest in the summer of 1934 had resulted in the CCF becoming the Official Opposition there, with five seats and 25% of the vote. At about the same time a provincial by-election in the West Coast province was won by the CCF. "It's a girl!" they wired the CCF leader in jubilation as Mrs. D. G. Steeves topped the poll.

But the Ontario upset in the spring of 1934 was poor preparation for the election ahead, and the same sort of disruption affected the CCF in most of the provinces. Besides, those interests opposed to the new movement had rallied their forces. That summer the CCF ran 37 candidates in Ontario, electing only one, the veteran socialist from Hamilton, Sam Lawrence.

In the fall of 1935 the new movement faced its first federal contest. Its leader went campaigning from one end of the country to the other, much as he had done regularly for years

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but with greater intensity. The CCF had prepared its election programme with care, and indirectly it had strongly influenced the programmes of the other political parties. In *Maclean's Magazine* for August 15 the "Politician with a Notebook" commented

"Today they are all Reformers. With the main idea seeming to be that everything that is, is wrong, and what with the passion for change, and Mr. Bennett raising the ante on Mr. King, and Mr. Stevens raising it on Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Woodsworth raising it on all of them, the political landscape has become utterly unrecognizable."

The result of the "passion for change" in which the depression and the CCF played such a part, was to shake the Bennett Government out of office and the King Government in. J. S. Woodsworth now found himself with six CCF members in the House of Commons, his former colleagues A. A. Heaps and Angus MacLennan, and four new ones, M. J. Coldwell and T. C. Douglas from Saskatchewan, Grant MacNeil and J. S. Taylor from British Columbia. Surveying the political situation in the House of Commons and in the provinces where the CCF had achieved electoral success, its leader could well feel that the new movement had made great strides in a very short period of time, that the new political party was rapidly getting beyond the tentative stage and becoming a factor to be reckoned with. Others agreed with him. In 1937, during a CCF national convention in Winnipeg, the *Free Press* of that city summed it up editorially

"As a party the CCF is about four and a half years old. Its first national convention was held in Regina in 1933. Today the CCF has seven members in the House of Commons. It is the Official Opposition in the Saskatchewan House. It has members in the Legislatures of three other provinces—seven in British Columbia, seven in Manitoba, and one in Ontario. That is a showing which indicates that Socialist voters are yet a small

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minority of the Canadian public. Still, for less than five years' work, it is a record CCF leaders can view without dismay."

It was a record achieved without patronage, without influence in high places, and with infinitesimally small campaign funds, painfully collected from individuals across the country. It was a record also achieved without surrender of principle to gain votes. J. S. Woodsworth's own conduct made any dissembling impossible. A striking example was the matter of the Orientals in British Columbia. Always pressing for them to be given the same rights as other Canadians, my father had once more urged their enfranchisement during discussion on a Government bill to disfranchise the Doukhobors in British Columbia, a bill which he vigorously opposed. His stand on the Orientals was made a political issue in the West Coast province during the 1935 federal election, with the CCF suffering to some extent at the polls as a result. Following the election, an editorial in the CCF provincial paper took him to task for dragging in "an academic discussion on the Orientals in British Columbia" on the Doukhobor Bill. My father promptly sent the following letter for publication in the paper:

"Undoubtedly in British Columbia the application of our principles to the Orientals is rather inconvenient. So also in Quebec the repeal of Section 98 of the Criminal Code, in rural Ontario the setting up of a Labour Code, in Winnipeg the socialization of our railways, in Alberta our attitude toward Social Credit. Does that mean that in these places Opportunism should be our guide? One recalls the old rhyme

'A merciful Providence  
Fashioned us holier  
So that we could  
Our principles swallow!'

Yours sincerely,

J. S. WOODSWORTH."

The same outspokenness characterized his work in the House of Commons. As the years went by, he seemed to grow ever

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more sensitive to human misery and ever more vigilant to protect human rights. Time seemed only to increase his vigour of speech, and many who heard him address the House remarked that to the end his voice was the voice of a young man. During his last decade in the Commons he devoted himself increasingly to pleading the cause of those least able to fight for themselves: men in prison, men without work, families on low incomes, people in minority groups, workers trying to organize for decent living-conditions.

Men in prison included some of those most bitter against him. In the early thirties, along with Agnes Macphail and some others, he fought for penitentiary reform. For years conditions had been bad in Canadian prisons. A number of riots during the twenties had brought an increasing demand from individuals and public bodies for an investigation into the penal system, with a view to modernizing the Canadian approach to crime and punishment. Then in 1932 the whole problem was brought sharply into public focus when seven members of the Communist Party, including their leader Tim Buck, were convicted under Section 98 and sentenced to five years in Kingston penitentiary. That October, shortly after their conviction there had been more riots in Kingston. Under questioning the Minister of Justice admitted that shots had been fired into the cell occupied by Tim Buck. Following this occurrence the warden and some guards had been dismissed, but the Government had turned a deaf ear to demands for investigation. The Minister brushed the matter aside as Communist agitation, in spite of the statement of a judge at the trial of one of the rioters to the effect that the men had reasonable grievances and had been long and repeatedly denied redress. An ugly cloud of suspicion hung over Kingston penitentiary.

That was the situation on the night of June 30, 1934. The session had been long, and the Government hoped to prorogue without incident before midnight. But first they had to get the money voted to carry on penitentiary administration, having left

this item till the very last night of the session. Around eleven o'clock when everything else was finished, the hot subject came up. The Conservative M.P. for Kingston rose to ask why the guards had been dismissed following the October riots. The Minister remained silent. Then Agnes Macphail described conditions in the penitentiary and asked if it were true that the dismissed warden was to be given a Civil Service position. The Minister coldly replied that he knew nothing of the report and that, as the Governor-General was even then on his way to the Parliament Buildings to prorogue the session, any further discussion about penitentiaries would have to stand over until some future occasion.

J. S. Woodsworth bristled at once. "The Minister has taken a most remarkable attitude." The Minister continued coldly indifferent. And then, with His Excellency on the way to close Parliament, with the members packed up to leave Ottawa for home, with the Dominion Day holiday coming up on Monday (this was Saturday night), the member for Winnipeg North Centre calmly announced that the House would sit until it got satisfaction from the Minister. When the Chairman enquired wearily "Shall the item carry?" the firm voice of J. S. Woodsworth replied "No, Mr. Chairman, the item does not carry." And that was that.

So they all came back three days later and there was a long discussion about penitentiaries, my father leading off the debate and demanding a full statement from the Minister. He got it, too, with full details about the Kingston riots and the attempt to cow Communism in Canada by shooting into Tim Buck's cell. The OCF leader commented:

"I remember in our childhood days we used to read the tales of Fenimore Cooper, and we learned it was the practice of the Indians in the olden days to tie a captured enemy to a tree and to fire arrows at him, seeing who could come nearest his head without hitting him. It looks to me as if this practice had been translated into the more modern method of putting a man into a

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cell, caging him up and then firing at him. Surely human beings are not animals. It is bad enough to hog a man, but surely it is not, even in European prisons, a customary means of punishment that guards can go outside the prison walls and take pot shots at a cell in which a political prisoner is confined."

He concluded by urging once again an impartial investigation into prison conditions in Canada by "very able men, men of experience and humanitarian views." The facts brought out in this final debate of the session did much to shock the public into demanding the long-delayed Royal Commission. Two years later, on the recommendation of the new Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, the Archambault Commission on Penitentiaries was set to work. The report of its investigation, tabled in 1938, allowed Canadians for the first time to see the urgency of the need for penal reform in this country.

During these years my father lived with Angus and me while in Ottawa. It was during one of his battles for prison reform that we noticed how tired he was when he came home to supper one night. We suggested that he take the evening off and that we all go to see Will Rogers in "State Fair". Never much of a movie-goer, and feeling a bit guilty about leaving Agnes Macphail to carry on the fight without him, he was nevertheless persuaded to go to the show. Knowing his objection to any sort of vulgarity, we were rather concerned as to his reaction. We saw the picture through while the audience chuckled over Will Rogers' salty humour and common touch, culminating in the horseplay of the hog-calling contest. The film had proceeded quite a way through its second showing when Angus suggested that we leave. Fearing that Father might have found the antics of Will Rogers a bit crude and the fun too robust, we turned to him and asked if he were ready to go. We found him laughing heartily, firmly rooted to his seat, and determined to wait for the hog-calling sequence to come round again!

Men in prison, J. S. Woodsworth called them 'the most defenceless class in the community—deprived of the rights of normal ordinary human beings' But there was another group who almost fitted the same description, those who had been caught by the undertow of the depression and had never managed to find steady employment afterwards. My father felt a special responsibility to champion their cause.

In the early summer of 1935 a great army of unemployed young men started to trek eastward to Ottawa to lay their problem before the Bennett Government. As they moved across the country gathering members and momentum, CCF members in Parliament repeatedly warned the Government that it must make provision for the men. But nothing was done. The trekkers had reached the city of Regina when on Dominion Day, federal and local police, acting on instructions from Ottawa, broke up a peaceful open-air meeting of marchers and Regina citizens, with the result that one person was killed and many were injured. Angus MacInn's raised the matter in the House next day, and when J. S. Woodsworth spoke a little later, his grief and indignation were great. Various M.P.s interrupted him with cynical remarks, one of them exclaiming, "You are not suffering yourself!" The CCF leader turned to him at once:

"No, I am not suffering, and I am glad that there are some of us who are not suffering at present who are prepared to stand up for these people. I hope the time will never come when I shall be so well-fed and comfortably-placed that I shall refuse to fight for the underdog. Some people say that this is poor politics. I do not care very much whether it is poor politics. I know there are gentlemen opposite who will go out on the hustings and say that we are allied to the Communists. I know that we have to run the risk of that but that does not matter. I intend to stand here and plead for the rights of these boys who are not given a fair chance in life."

But the Bennett Government continued inactive, hoping

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that if law and order were maintained, the unemployed would fade away some day. The King Government continued to tie to the same hope. Three years later a situation somewhat similar to that of Regina arose in Vancouver. Some five hundred men who had come down from the camps found neither work nor any hope of it in the city. With nowhere to stay, they took possession of the Post Office and the Art Gallery, and for a month they bivouacked in these public buildings while Vancouver citizens helped them with food and money. During this time the CCF leader kept warning the Federal Government that, unless it took a hand to provide work or maintenance for the men, there would be trouble.

On Sunday, June 19, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, on orders from Ottawa, ejected the men from the Post Office, using tear gas and riot clubs. As a result, 36 persons were in hospital, numerous others were under medical treatment, and 21 men were in jail.

Next day, when the House of Commons met, the financial critic of the Conservatives was ready to reply to the Budget. In cutaway coat and striped trousers, he had his notes before him and was just rising to speak when J. S. Woodsworth sprang to his feet. "Mr. Speaker, I desire . . . to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the serious situation existing in Vancouver as a result of the eviction of single, unemployed men from the Post Office, and in order at once to stop disturbances." Such a motion took precedence over other business, and the CCF leader had the floor. In an impassioned speech he flayed the Government for its month of inaction in the face of repeated warnings. Then he turned to the plight of the men:

"As I see the matter, the men took the only means available to them of calling attention to their plight. They did not resort to arms, they did not resort to force. They simply attempted to bring their condition to the attention of the provincial and federal governments . . . After all, these men are not criminals—the House

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should be reminded of that—but poor fellows out of work, deprived of the opportunity of making a living.”

In trenchant words he sketched one of those unforgettable contrasts that made him seem to his fellow-members like the pricking of their conscience.

“The irony of the whole situation is that the Prime Minister [Mr. Mackenzie King] himself was away over the week-end celebrating his grandfather’s revolution . . . No, sitting in a post office is a peaceable thing, and William Lyon Mackenzie resorted to arms. His grandson, the Prime Minister, spends the week-end in lauding the action which his grandfather took, and yet his Government here is using violence against men who themselves have used no violence and are simply protesting against intolerable conditions.”

He emphasized that the least the Government could do was to provide food and shelter for these men until work could be given them. Unless that was done, there would be even more serious trouble on the Pacific Coast. Then, seeing the Minister of Justice “muttering something to himself”, the CCF leader supposed he would presently “accuse me of inciting to trouble”. Mr. Lapointe replied “Yes, it is an invitation to trouble.” That really roused J. S. Woodsworth and he warned of the danger of allowing the men “to realize that the Government cares precious little about them.” The trouble was that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor. He had just been reading the evidence given before the Royal Commission on the Textile Industry.

“I want to say now, in all seriousness, that that discloses a shameful, sickening story of heartless exploitation, of wholesale robbery by men prominent in the public life of Canada. Inordinate greed, bare-faced lying, and criminal fraud characterize the careers of this gang of high-class crooks” who “shelter within the structure of our tariff arrangements.”

Strong language that, and he was promptly called to order by the Speaker for straying far afield from the Vancouver post

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office. But he had begun a discussion which lasted almost the entire day and which served notice on the Government that the people of Canada were reaching the stage where they were not content to watch thousands of their number roam like pariahs about the country while the Government took no responsibility for them.

Men in prison, men without work, men at the mercy of unscrupulous employers; yes, this third group needed a champion too. The CCF leader introduced a bill to make it a criminal offence for an employer to discriminate against an employee for the sole reason that he was a member of a trade union. That first time, 1937, his bill was refused a hearing because the Government was anxious to adjourn Parliament so that the Cabinet Ministers might attend the Coronation of George VI. So the next year he tried again. This time the bill was "talked out", a procedure by which the bill is debated for an allotted time and then goes down to the bottom of the agenda where it cannot be reached again during the session. But in 1939, when my father's spade-work had helped to arouse the unions to the point where they demanded such legislation, the Government itself introduced it and the bill quickly became law.

Gradually the unions were coming to recognize their debt to J. S. Woodsworth and the CCF who were consistently ready to help, yet always careful not to interfere in union affairs. Interviewed on the clash between John L. Lewis of the C.I.O. and William Green of the A.F. of L., my father told the *Winnipeg Tribune* on July 26, 1937:

"Our position is to maintain the absolute right of the workers to join unions of their own choice. The CCF is not committed to one or other type [i.e., craft or industrial unions]."

Some of the union men themselves were beginning to see the need for direct political action through the CCF, as the

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unions in Britain and European countries acted directly through Labour and Socialist political parties. At a banquet given by the CCF in Windsor for its national leader in May, 1938, C. H. Millard, Executive Board member of the United Auto Workers of America (C.I.O.), urged close co-operation between the members of his union and the CCF. At this gathering J. S. Woodsworth voiced the hope that the CCF would receive greater support from unions generally. Labour, he said, must recognize that political organization as well as unions would be required to gain its ends. In August of that same year the Nova Scotia Mineworkers' Union decided to affiliate with the CCF. And within a few years Charlie Millard, then Canadian Director of the Steelworkers' Union, would also be taking a direct part in politics as a CCF member of the Ontario Legislature.

These were the turbulent years when Fascist and Nazi dictators were loudly proclaiming the superiority of ruthless brutality over the decadence of inefficient democracy. Many Canadians, shaken out of their old beliefs by the depression, were all too ready to lend a sympathetic ear, particularly when they could belong to organizations which inflated their neglected ego and gave them the prospect of tyrannizing over others in the not-too-distant future. Other Canadians, worried and confused over the gathering war-clouds abroad, were disposed to welcome measures which they hoped might keep down disturbances at home and appease the aggressors in Europe.

Always alert to threats against civil liberty, always aware that freedom is taken away in instalments, J. S. Woodsworth kept a vigilant eye on the Canadian danger spots. Perhaps the most overt was the notorious Padlock Law in the province of Quebec. My father carried on a strong campaign for its disallowance, in both the 1937 and 1938 sessions he urged that it be referred to the Supreme Court to see if it were within the jurisdiction of the Federal Parliament to disallow it. He pointed

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out that Ottawa had not been slow to disallow two acts passed by the Alberta Social Credit Government when these were considered infringements of civil liberty. Why the reluctance to deal with an even more glaring danger? But Ottawa continued reluctant and did nothing about the Padlock Law.

Then, of course, there were self-declared Fascist groups, both among people of German origin in Western Canada, and among native Canadians, both French- and English-speaking, mainly in the cities of Montreal and Toronto. On several occasions my father drew to the attention of the Government and the public alleged instances of uniformed men carrying on secret drills. He played no small part in giving publicity to the anti-Semitic and anti-democratic character of newspapers and bulletins issued by these Fascist organizations in Canada and designed to spread hatred and disunity among the people of this country. War was clearly on the way, and J. S. Woodsworth feared lest its first casualty be civil liberty.

## HIS FINEST HOUR

IN a long committee-room of the Parliament Buildings, its Gothic windows overlooking the broad expanse of the Ottawa River and the blue horizon of the Gatineau Hills, some forty men and women were gathered together, obviously waiting. That this was no ordinary occasion was equally obvious, for they sat silent, their attitudes tense and expectant. Ill-at-ease with each other, their thoughts turned inward, they waited.

The date was September 6, 1939. Canada had been at war for three days, although the nature and extent of her commitments were still unknown. From every province of Canada except Prince Edward Island, these men and women had come in response to an emergency call. This was the National Council of the CCF, the governing body of the movement between conventions. Supplemented on this occasion by provincial presidents and secretaries, this National Council meeting was one of the most representative ever held. It had need to be, for upon the shoulders of these men and women had fallen the terrible responsibility of deciding the policy of the movement in the war which had just begun and whose ending none could foresee.

All eyes turned to J. S. Woodsworth as he rose in his place at the head of the table. He looked pale and strained as he called the meeting to order, but his manner was composed as he outlined the purpose of the three-day gathering and explained the background against which the delegates must make their decision. As to his own stand there was no doubt. His voice gathered strength, his gestures became energetic, as he made a strong plea for keeping Canada out of the war or,

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failing that, for devoting the energies of the CCF to protesting against participation of any kind

The delegates listened, profoundly moved. Here was their National President, their leader whom they had loved and revered ever since they had known him, a man whose whole life had been one passionate protest against evil, pleading with them to take their stand beside him and denounce the ultimate evil, war. Every one of these men and women loathed war and feared its consequences, most of them had devoted active years to the task of trying to make sure that never would there be another war. Some of them would still take the pacifist position. But most had reached the slow conviction, along with Socialists in other parts of the world, that the Fascist and Nazi aggression meant inevitable war, and that the longer this was postponed, the more dreadful would grow the record of inhuman brutality and the less hope there would be for eventual democracy and peace.

And so they listened in troubled silence, weighing his arguments, almost overcome by his burning sincerity, longing to escape from the decision they knew they must make yet fired by his own courage to come to grips with the most difficult problem the movement had ever had to face.

He finished, and for most of the day the twenty-eight voting delegates and the fourteen other movement members debated the war situation and the attitude that the CCF should take toward it. Finally a six man committee was struck off to draft a statement of policy for the consideration of the council. Its members included H. I. S. Borgford from Nova Scotia, Angus MacInnis and Herbert Gargrave from British Columbia, F. R. Scott from Quebec, George H. Williams from Saskatchewan, and David Lewis, the national secretary. Before the motion was put to establish the committee, J. S. Woodsworth, seconded by his old Labour friend S. J. Farmer of Winnipeg, moved "that this Council refuse to endorse any measure that will put Canada into the war." After considerable discussion it was

agreed, though not unanimously, that this motion should not be put at that time, but that the committee should proceed with its draft statement.

The story of the committee's work lives unforgettably in the minds of its members. One of them, Angus MacLennan, recalls that it was the steady and wise persistence of Frank Scott, later National Chairman of the movement, which made eventual agreement possible. For, like the rest of the delegates, indeed like the rest of the world at that time, the committee members were sorely divided and torn, even within themselves. But they emerged with a policy statement, one which could only be a compromise among their differing viewpoints, a declaration that the CCF favoured Canada's participation in the war, but only to the extent of economic assistance.

The National Council spent the following day discussing the statement, at length and with much soul searching. For the pacifists among them the decision had long been made, now they required only the courage to adhere to it. But the pacifists were relatively few in number. For the majority of the delegates the decision was the thorny matter of choosing between two principles. Would they cling to the time honoured principle that the Socialist must remain neutral in every war because all wars are merely the struggles of rival imperialisms or would they adopt the new principle that it is the responsibility of the Socialist to stop aggression and preserve existing freedoms as part of the painful process of building a world where law and order will be respected because they rest on a foundation of social justice and democratic control? They made their decision, as amended, the statement was approved by a vote of 15 to 7. The secretary noted in the minutes: "Some delegates had been forced to leave before the vote was reached. (Transportation considerations.) It is perhaps important to point out that all who voted against the adoption of the statement did not do so for the same reason. Thus some did because they opposed all participation, and others because they supported fuller participa-

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tion." It was decided that the following day M. J. Coldwell, CCF National Chairman, would put the movement's decided policy before the House of Commons and the country.

But the next day, as soon as the Prime Minister had finished his lengthy speech, it was J. S. Woodsworth who first rose to speak from the CCF group. It was a silent House, the members weighed down with a sense of the responsibility that was theirs in face of the grim fact of war. They had heard the Prime Minister's long, troubled speech, covering so many phases of the situation, leaving so much still obscure, appealing for unity at this critical time. At one point he had looked across the great Chamber and paid tribute to J. S. Woodsworth in these words, tribute the more striking in that he knew the attitude of the CCF leader:

"There are few men in this Parliament for whom, in some particulars, I have greater respect than the leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. I admire him, in my heart, because time and again he has had the courage to say what lay on his conscience, regardless of what the world might think of him. A man of that calibre is an ornament to any Parliament."

It was with this tribute that J. S. Woodsworth began, expressing his appreciation to the Prime Minister and adding "I could almost wish that he had not said what he did, because I am afraid that to-night I must disappoint him and disappoint some of my other friends in the House." The members waited while he made some preliminary comment on Mr. King's speech, criticizing it for its lack of information on so many vital points. Then they became all attention as his voice deepened in the way they knew presaged something of importance.

"Tonight I find myself in rather an anomalous position. My own attitude towards war is fairly well-known to the members of this House and, I think, throughout the country. My views on war became crystallized during the last war, long before the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation came into existence, but our

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Co-operative Commonwealth Federation is a democratic organization that decides matters of policy. My colleagues in the House and in the National Council of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which has been in session with us almost continuously for the last two days, have very generously urged that I take this opportunity of expressing my own opinions with regard to this matter.

"The position of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation will be stated at the earliest possible opportunity by one of my colleagues. I say frankly that with part of that policy I heartily agree, with some portions of it I cannot agree. Yet I was never so proud to belong to the group with which I am associated . . ."

Many members of the House, many watchers in the Gallery, must have felt a surge of pride that day too, pride that there were men of such calibre, as they watched that frail figure, standing alone among them, speaking the truth as he saw it, regardless of consequences. Here was a man who recognized the right of the majority to make the decision for the group, yet who insisted on the right of the minority, even a minority of one, to express its own opinion. Here was a man of integrity who could recognize the integrity of others when they differed most sharply from him, and mature to the point where he could take pride in being associated with them. Never in all his years in Parliament had J. S. Woodsworth attained such stature as in this hour.

It was as a man apart, as a prophet, that he spoke that day, distilling into a single speech his hatred of militarism, his fear of the British connection, his scorn for the way the democracies had helped to build the armaments of the dictators, his mistrust of the Government's foreign policy. He turned to the North American continent, assessing the strains that Canadian war participation would place upon the ties with the United States, upon the age-old opposition of French Canada to any form of conscription, upon the melting-pot of European peoples that was Western Canada. Surely the preservation of Canadian

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unity, of North American unity, was our major task at this time! He reviewed the whole sorry story of the rise of the dictators, the blundering of successive British governments, the failure of the League of Nations, the return to naked power politics.

Then he came to his own position and the reasons for it, his voice ringing out in the absolute silence of the lofty Commons Chamber.

"I would ask: did the last war settle anything? I venture to say that it settled nothing, and the next war into which we are asked to enter, however big and bloody it may be, is not going to settle anything either. That is not the way in which settlements are brought about."

He raised his hand in solemn warning.

"While we are urged to fight for freedom and democracy, it should be remembered that war is the very negation of both. The victor may win, but if he does, it is by adopting the self-same tactics which he condemns in his enemy . . . As one who has tried for a good many years to take a stand for the common people, personally I cannot give my consent to anything that will drag us into another war."

Not a member moved as he told how wireless and the aeroplane, soaring from the scientific miracles of our day, had destroyed forever the "old narrow boundaries" between nations, that henceforth no nation could be free to do as it saw fit, regardless of others, but must come to obey international traffic signals like the motorist in any modern city. He recalled the motto he had adopted many years ago: "Last century made the world a neighbourhood, this century must make it a brotherhood."

Then, gathering together his energies into a supreme effort, he denounced war as anti-Christian, using the very quotation the Prime Minister had given earlier in the day, now to give point to his faith that somehow the forces for good would sustain those with the courage to take no part in war.

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Truth forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne,  
Yet that scaffold sways the future,  
And behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow,  
Keeping watch above His own."

This quotation from James Russell Lowell had long been one of J. S. Woodsworth's compass points. It gave him strength now for his final words.

"I do not care whether you think me an impossible idealist or a dangerous crank. I am going to take my place beside the children and these young people, because it is only as we adopt new policies that this world will be at all a livable place for our children who follow us. We laud the courage of those who go to the front, yes, I have boys of my own, and I hope they are not cowards, but if any one of those boys, not from cowardice but really through belief, is willing to take his stand on this matter and, if necessary, to face a concentration camp or a firing squad, I shall be more proud of that boy than if he enlisted for the war."

Then it was that a member cried "Shame"—a little stone that rolled away into the canyon of stillness where men sat alone with their thoughts as the Conscience of the Commons brought his last great speech to an end. Silence, the silence of profound respect, brooded over the Chamber.

There were attacks upon him in the press, of course, but the prevailing mood was one of respect for his courage and integrity. An example was the despatch of September 9 by "Torchy" Anderson, then Press Gallery Correspondent for the Vancouver Province. Here are a few lines:

"Audible protest against the policy of the Government came from the gaunt, grey leader of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation.

"Mr. Woodsworth spoke for himself, he made that clear. In the evident cleavage of opinion within his own party the old leader, honoured and respected in all corners of the House, spoke what may well be his party valedictory.

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"True to the principles he has so consistently advocated, this kindly, courageous man tided his colours to the mast and sailed off on the lonely route where conscience is the only compass . . .

"There may be those who, at Mr. Woodsworth's own invitation, may call him a 'dangerous criminal' or a 'crazy crank'. But there were many in that crowded House on Friday night who will not forget the sight of the veteran leader reciting his creed at the bitterest hour of his political career."

J. S. Woodsworth spoke only once more in Parliament. It was four days later, when the wartime budget was under consideration. Canada's participation in the war was now an accepted fact, the House was discussing ways and means of meeting the heavy drain on the country's resources. My father spoke briefly, devoting most of his time to an attack on war-profiteering and the need for measures to eliminate it. Talk of "equality of sacrifice" was absurd, he said, in a situation where some were called upon to give their lives while others gave up only a few luxuries at best. The least we could do was to remove some of the absurdity by conscripting wealth—"bank accounts and . . . property of every kind"—before taking even one man to serve in the forces.

In conclusion, he turned to the problem of civil liberty in wartime, pointing out that if orders-in-council tabled that very day were strictly construed, it would be impossible for members to express themselves freely, impossible for them to discuss the terms of the peace to follow the war. His final words were these:

"I would hope that through all the restrictions and privations which necessarily must come in a war, the principles of liberty, the principles of free speech and the principles of a free Parliament which, as I said the other night, had been upheld to this stage, may be upheld to the very end of the war—however long it may last."

Those were the last words J. S. Woodsworth ever uttered in Parliament. They show him as a man who, having failed to

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obtain the whole loaf was prepared still to work for the crumbs, always with the whole loaf as his ultimate objective. They reveal his recognition that in Canada democracy had attainments well worth preserving, and his hope that the citizens of this country might be wise enough and strong enough to preserve them.

Parliament met late in the spring of 1940 after a very heavy federal election campaign in which J. S. Woodsworth and M. J. Coldwell between them covered the country from coast to coast. Here is a sketch of the OCF leader as he appeared to "Torchy" Anderson as he stepped off the train for campaign meetings on the West Coast. In the *Province* for March 9 Mr. Anderson wrote

"He is not a man of repose. High-strung, tense, he seldom relaxes. Work, more work—that is his life. He has no hobbies. His only relaxation is walking. He eats normally but sparingly. He sleeps little and lightly.

"Since early manhood he has worn a beard. In the days of his Vancouver longshoring his beard was black. Today his head and beard are silvery . . .

"Of Mr. Woodsworth some say he has mellowed during his years on the front Opposition benches at Ottawa. That may be true, but that mellowing process has not blurred the sharp focus of principle by which he measures every question."

In the election which followed this campaign, my father won his greatest personal triumph at the polls. In spite of his forthright opposition to the war, his hold on public opinion was such that nothing could shake him. "WOODSWORTH'S SEAT IS SAFE", proclaimed a *Winnipeg Tribune* headline, beneath which figures showed that he had gained a plurality of the overseas service vote. But the strain of the election campaign had been tremendous. And the tragedy of the war overshadowed him now, contributing to his failing health. It

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was a worn and saddened man who took his place in the House of Commons when it opened in the middle of May.

The previous day the new CCF caucus had met for the first time. It was a good group, thought my father. M. J. Coldwell and Tommy Douglas were back from Saskatchewan again. Angus MacInnes had been returned for the third time from British Columbia. It was too bad Grant MacNeil had been defeated in North Vancouver and his old friend A. A. Heaps in North Winnipeg. But there were three more men from Saskatchewan. Percy Wright, a farmer from Tisdale, "Sandy" Nicholson, a United Church minister he had known for some time, and Hugh Cartleden, a young school teacher from Yorkton. And now there was the first member from Nova Scotia, Clarie Gillis, a miner. Yes, CCF strength was slowly growing.

But J. S. Woodsworth felt lonely in the caucus. He was the only one to oppose Canada's participation in the war, and he felt a tremendous compulsion to re-state his position in the House. With respect and affection his colleagues accepted his determination to speak, while assuring him that the whole country knew his stand and that there was no need to put himself through such further strain. There was general apprehension as his colleagues noted his excitement and flushed cheeks and thought of how his health had declined over the past few years.

The House opened on Thursday. Two days later there was a meeting of the CCF National Council which usually convenes as Parliament opens so that there may be an exchange of views with the M.P.s on matters likely to arise during the session. Wartime difficulties had cut down representation from distant points, and arrangements were made to hold the rather small meeting in a committee room just off the Parliamentary Reading Room. Dim and airless, its gloom was a great contrast with the May sunshine outdoors.

M. J. Coldwell presided, my father on his right, while the Council members sat along three sides of the committee table. The session was quiet and constructive. David Lewis, National

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Secretary, was reading a letter from the Saskatchewan Provincial Council when my father started to rise. Mr. Coldwell urged him to wait for the conclusion of the letter, but he said "I must go," and again attempted to rise. He fell back into his chair, saying quietly "I think I've had a stroke." Later we learned that Hugh Castleden had observed him a few seconds earlier trying to reach for a glass of water. His right hand fell to his side and he reached with his left. We learned too that Mother had been watching him apprehensively and waiting for the moment he would say that something was wrong. Her self-control and her determination to let him do things in his own way were always amazing, and never more so than at this moment.

The men carried him out to the elevator and then to his own office, remarking later on the calmness and control of his face. Dr. Gershaw, M.P. for Medicine Hat, arrived on the scene and bent over him as he lay on the couch, his eyes covered by a cloth. The waiting men in Mr. Coldwell's office learned that the right side was paralyzed. My father, still able to speak, was apologetic for having disrupted the meeting, and urged his colleagues to proceed. Mother, quiet and self-possessed, went off with him to the hospital.

Days of suspense followed. Father, who had lost his speech almost immediately, regained it after some days, but failed to move his arm and leg in spite of continual and impatient efforts. Messages and flowers poured into his room from across Canada, and there were countless anxious enquiries at the Parliament Buildings. Within a month he was permitted to leave the hospital for a nursing home, but his condition had improved so little that it became clear to almost everyone but himself that never again would he be able to move around actively. On July 29 he celebrated his sixty-sixth birthday at a little dinner-party arranged by the members of the CCF caucus. A few days later he and Mother left the city for a short visit at her old farm home near Cavan before they took the train for the west.

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Late in August they reached Winnipeg. It was a sad home-coming. The children were scattered far away; not a single close relative was left in Manitoba. Leaning heavily on Mother's arm Father lumped through the gate of 60 Maryland Street, toiled up the steps and entered the house where three generations of his family had lived. Former returns to this house had found him tired but still tense with energy, eager to take up at once the threads of his Winnipeg life, impatient to plan his next speaking trip. Other home-comings had found the family welcoming him warmly and crowding about to listen to his tales of adventure. Years ago it had been his mother and his sisters who had hurried forward at the sound of his quick step, later it was his wife and the excited crowd of children.

Now he and Mother entered a lonely house. Never had it seemed deserted before. Always he had barely waited to unpack his bag before planning to fill the spacious downstairs rooms with evening gatherings. Always there had been groups of young folk who came to hear him and who stayed late to talk, while he infused them with his own driving energy and showed them the vision of the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth of the twentieth century. But now he was sick and helpless, and the glory had gone with his vitality. The house was lifeless and empty, he felt the great, leaden weight of it upon his spirit.

He went into the lamplit study and lay down upon the davenport. What memories were his as he peered around the dearly-loved room! On the floor he could see the lion-skin rug. Bruce had shot that lioness in Africa. Countless visitors had admired the tawny skin with its great head whose eyes blazed fiercely in the reflection of the lamp while Father had read to them Bruce's thrilling account of the lion hunt. Now the study was silent. He would never read again. His eyes sought the lamp whose crimson base glowed softly like the sun seen through a fog. Belva had made that lamp, Belva now away down in Ontario, far from home. On the mantelpiece he could see the white gleam of the marble Cupid and Psyche.

which Charles had brought him from Italy. On the upper shelf were the two carved wooden beams ends which he and Lucy had brought from an old Chinese temple. Beyond them projected the little gargoyle, replica of one on Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Grace had brought that home from her year in France. Far-away places. He would never see them again. The stroke had ended everything for him.

He thought of all the lovely art treasures he and Lucy had seen during their trip to Europe a year or so after they were married. That wasn't so long ago! Could it really be thirty-five years? But even at that, they weren't old people yet! He thought of his grandmother. Her tea-chest was in that corner. He had given it to Grace and she would be taking it away one of these days, he supposed. In one of its two compartments was his grandfather's heavy silver watch and the key for winding it. Ralph was to have that, one of these days. His eyes lingered on his mother's secretary, fine-grained, highly-polished. His father had always known and loved good wood. He knew that between it and the window was hanging his grandfather's sword. He thought about that sword. His Tory grandfather had used it to defend his home city of Toronto—York it was then—from William Lyon Mackenzie and his band of rebels. He smiled as he recalled how he had once told the incident in the House of Commons and rallied Mackenzie King on how they two, descendants of the Rebel and the Tory, had reversed the roles of their grandfathers. He had added that unless the bachelor Prime Minister were very careful, his grandchildren would not have the pride in their grandfather that Mr. King cherished for his . . .

He started abruptly. The house was very quiet. "Lucy! Lucy!" he called in dismay. Mother hurried in from the kitchen where she was preparing supper. They ate their meal at a corner of the big table in the dark-panelled dining-room where there had been so much good fellowship through the years. To-night the room seemed large and lonely. The steady tick-tock, tick-

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tock of the clock on the sideboard seemed to mark off the silence in a harsh, unfeeling way. Bedtime came, and there was the long, painful climb up the dim stairs and along the shadowy hallway where Great-Grandmother and Great-Grandfather Woodsworth looked down from their frames. Then round the corner into the big front bedroom with the great cherrywood bed. His father had died in that bed. Now it was his.

He and Mother got settled and the house was entirely quiet. The rush of the cars along the street emphasized the stillness within. Father had come home to a home peopled only by memories, the memories of those who had been here and were gone. Now he had been strack down. There was no one left to keep the old home alive.

The pleasant autumn weather gave way to the biting frosts of early winter. The prospect of spending the long cold months in that great deserted house appeared less and less attractive to my parents. Gradually it became evident to them that they must give up the old home. My father had already had to give up so much that Mother hesitated before this fresh trial for him, but the advantages of the mild West Coast winter were great, among them being the fact that several of the children were settled there. One morning Father came down to breakfast with the announcement that they had decided to move and that we must pack up at once.

Once he had made a decision he never wavered. From that moment he gave himself wholeheartedly to the task of dismantling the house, sharing the furniture among the family and friends, supervising the many details of the moving. He decided to give his big illustrated dictionary, the one that had accompanied the family in all its wanderings, to the school in his constituency which had been named for him. Frail though he was, he decided to make the presentation himself. So one cold morning, Stanley Knowles, then OCF organizer, arrived in his battered old car to take my father and the dictionary to

the Woodsworth School in Brooklands. The member for Winnipeg North Centre wasn't able to make the presentation speech, but he watched the children as Stanley Knowles said the things he would have wished to say. For Stanley the occasion must have been a moving and difficult experience, for my father it was undoubtedly one of the incidents that led him increasingly to see in Stanley Knowles his logical successor as member of Parliament for the riding.

For several weeks we spent our evenings reading old letters and looking at faded souvenirs while Father lost himself in the years and among the friends of long ago. Some of this mass of material he sent to other members of the family, much of it he burned, accompanying Mother or me to the furnace and watching the last flare as it died down to ashes. Finally the house itself was an empty shell. The morning came when my parents drove off to the station, bound for Vancouver. Mother turned for a last look at the old home, but Father, still ready for new experiences with people, was already engaged in conversation with the taxi-driver.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### HIS LAST MONTHS

THE last months of my father's life were darkened by increasing weakness and by the war which moved relentlessly toward its global phase. During the summer of 1941 he still hoped that rest and sunshine might enable him to recover enough health to continue his work, though at a reduced tempo. He spent long afternoons on the beach, picnicking with the family, or driving with friends to beautiful spots which he had not seen for years. Always there were the visits and the Bowers and the letters, from friends near and far.

When autumn came he was determined to attend the adjourned session of Parliament. So late in October he and Mother made the long train journey to Ottawa, stopping off briefly in Winnipeg where he discussed the steps to be taken in resigning his parliamentary seat should his health prove inadequate to the work of the session. He was prevailed upon to defer any action for the time being, in the hope that his health might prove equal to his work.

On November 3, when Parliament opened, J. S. Woodsworth was in his seat in the House of Commons and was given a warm tribute of welcome by Prime Minister King. Colleagues and friends crowded about him, welcoming him back after his long absence and trusting that he would long be among them. But the trip had been too much for him. Within a few days he and Mother were once more on the train, travelling to Vancouver. But this time he had to make the whole journey in bed, recognizing the fact that his active life was finished. Stanley Knowles tells how, during the train's brief stop in Winnipeg, a railwayman, one of my father's constituents,

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came in from his work in the yards to see him as he lay in his berth. In the midst of his weakness and sore disappointment, Father was pleased and touched by the visit and by the knowledge that everywhere along the line there were railway workers asking about him. This trip to Vancouver was to be his last.

As he gave up his ties with life, one by one, the question of the CCF leadership had no longer to be faced. As far back as 1936 he had realized that he must lighten some of his load. At the national convention in Toronto that year he pointed out that he occupied both the position of parliamentary leader and that of National Chairman of the CCF. He urged the delegates to consider whether or not this dual position was in the best interests of the movement. No action was taken at the convention, so at the national convention in Winnipeg the following year, he referred to the matter again, saying "If this Convention feels it wise and possible to make a division of the offices, I shall be greatly relieved." In response to his wish, the delegates went at least part way. He remained parliamentary leader, but the other office was divided between a national president and a national chairman, the latter to undertake the heavy administrative work of the movement. J. S. Woodsworth became National President, M. J. Coldwell was given the job of National Chairman.

In 1940 when the national convention met once more in Winnipeg, J. S. Woodsworth was absent for the first time, ill at home, crippled by the stroke. But in every delegate's mind he was the central presence at the meeting. No sooner were the preliminaries over than the secretary read the following letter from the National President:

"To the Comrades in the CCF:

"The state of my health at present prevents my taking an active part in the work of our organization and it is improbable that I shall be able to take responsibility for an executive position. Hence I feel that I must offer my resignation.

"Ever since the formation of the CCF I have held two positions

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—first, that of House Leader and second, that of President. To the first position there was no formal appointment. In 1921, when the former Labour Party was set up in the House, Mr William Irvine made the announcement, 'Mr Woodsworth is the Leader and I am the Group.'

"Since then I have simply carried on. Personally I am inclined to think it would be well for the CCF members of the House to choose their own House leader. However, that can be decided later. At this time, under the circumstances, it seems wise for me to resign.

"As to the Presidency, I have always been opposed to positions being held by those unable to give active service. Further, on the important question of War Policy, my personal position differs from that of the majority of the Executive, and, I take it, from that of the majority of our members. It is not fair, either to the organization or myself, that I should occupy an executive position under these circumstances. Hence, from this position also, I resign.

"Needless to say I retain the heartiest interest in the work of our movement and treasure the fellowship which has persisted in spite of our differences in conviction. I am hoping that after a little time my health may improve sufficiently to enable me to resume active work in the CCF."

The letter was signed "J. S. Woodsworth, per L.L.W." It was in Mother's clear handwriting. Father's right hand had been useless since the stroke. The ideas were his own, but the two of them wrote as one.

The convention was stunned. The CCF without J. S. Woodsworth at its head? Such a thing was quite unthinkable. The secretary moved that the letter be referred to the National Council for study and consideration. But that body very quickly decided that, as the letter had been addressed to the convention, it must be dealt with directly by the delegates. It was his first parliamentary colleague, William Irvine, who moved that the resignation of the President be not accepted, and that the question of House Leader be referred to the parliamentary group for decision. Seconded by S. J. Farmer, my father's old

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associate in the days of the Winnipeg Strike, the motion was carried unanimously by a standing vote of the national convention. A further motion sent Messrs. Irvine and Farmer as a delegation to interview the National President.

The following morning an anxious convention listened to their report. J. S. Woodsworth had held firmly to the position that he did not want to hold an office in which he could not be active. However, said Mr. Irvine, he was confident that Mr. Woodsworth would be prepared to accept an honorary position. Upon the instruction of the convention it took the Constitution Committee only a very short time to find means of creating an office of Honorary President and abolishing that of President. It took the convention an even shorter time to ratify the report. At the elections that same afternoon J. S. Woodsworth was the only nominee for Honorary President and was declared elected by acclamation. The office of Honorary President lasted for only two years, lapsing after his death. There has never been any suggestion of renewing it.

One point about J. S. Woodsworth's proposed resignation is worth noting particularly. At every other crisis in his life, when once he had become convinced that he differed deeply from an organization on a matter of vital principle, he left that organization. He never left the CCF, and his letter makes it clear that, while he felt he must resign office, he had no intention of leaving the movement. There were at least two reasons for this. First, the CCF was a democratic movement to the point where he felt he might remain in it without doing violence to his beliefs. Second, in spite of his sharp difference on war policy, he was nevertheless convinced that no other organization was as effective an instrument for achieving the better society to the building of which he had given his life. For J. S. Woodsworth his work was always more important than himself.

In the matter of his resignation as M. P. for Winnipeg North Centre, Stanley Knowles has correspondence which he re-

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ceived from him in the early weeks of 1942, following his last journey to Ottawa. My father was anxious to resign immediately, but deferred action in accordance with the advice of his constituency organization as to the best timing for the announcement of his resignation.

That last winter the war dominated our lives. Pearl Harbor had struck with appalling suddenness in December. My father lay in bed in our little apartment in Vancouver, the windows blacked out against the danger of Japanese invasion, listening to the drone of planes overhead, thinking about the horror of this new world conflict. Doubts came upon him of the value of his work, of the value of human existence itself in the face of such barbarity, but always he regained his faith that somehow right would triumph, that some day humanity would outgrow the brute within it.

Later my mother talked to me about his deepest beliefs as he expressed them to her during those last weeks of his life. He spoke of his conviction that before the world could be set right there must be a great expansion of spiritual growth within the people, a flowering of love within each soul for his fellow-man that would make possible the cleansing of suffering and injustice from the world. He talked of feeling a Presence, an all-pervasive Force For Good that had the world in its keeping, and again he would quote the lines from Lowell, the lines beginning "Truth forever on the scaffold", and ending "But behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own." That, she felt, was J. S. Woodsworth's ultimate thinking about life.

Even during these last weeks there were moments of brightness. There was the day Joe Noseworthy won the by-election in South York just outside Toronto, defeating Conservative leader Arthur Meighen and giving the CCF its first Ontario seat in the House of Commons. The next day, February 10, my father sent this exultant message from his sickbed to the CCF New Commonwealth in Toronto.

"I suppose we must accept the information of the radio and the press, but really it is too good to be true. The first news came to me over the telephone from an old war-horse with whom I had run in Vancouver as a Labour man in 1920—unsuccessfully. He was jubilant. 'The most significant event in Canada for years' . . . Congratulations to Mr. Noseworthy."

There were even opportunists for him to give advice and help. Learning that I had been asked to speak about his life, Father took a keen interest in helping me prepare the talk. He divided the years of his spiritual growth into four periods, each illumined by "new light demanding changes of thought and manner of life". First there was the period when he realized that the Kingdom of Heaven must be built now on earth, and the emphasis was his. Then came the time when he learned that life and salvation were not merely individual experiences, but the fruit of social participation. That led to his exploration and knowledge of the existing social order, as social service worker, longshoreman, member of Parliament. His final phase was the clear recognition of "the limitations and dangers of physical force". He felt that in every phase of his spiritual development he had been able to make some impress upon his generation, save with the last and to him the most crucial, of all his convictions.

As the winter drew to its close we saw that Father's life was ebbing with it. Mother was worn with the long strain, and in spite of the combined resources of the family, his illness finally reached the stage where hospital care became necessary. We took him there and he lingered for a little while longer. Then, on the first day of spring, he passed quietly away.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### HIS INFLUENCE AND ITS SOURCES

**F**OLLOWING his death a multitude of tributes attested to the place that J. S. Woodsworth had filled in the minds and hearts of his countrymen and to the sorrow left by his passing. Press and public men paid homage to his sterling character and, even while many discounted the ideas he advanced, to his signal influence in raising the level of political thinking across the country. To these more formal expressions of respect were added a host of little personal messages of love and grief from those who felt that something very precious had gone from among them.

There were those who in their tributes sought to discover the secret of his living, the source of his strength, the well-spring of his inspiration. At memorial services across Canada friends and colleagues of many years' standing told the thousands who came to hear them of their particular experience of his personality, of their thoughts about how it had shaped his contribution to this country.

At the large memorial service in Vancouver his first colleague in Parliament, William Irvine, poured into beautiful and inspiring language something of what he felt about the man he had known so long and so intimately.

"He was genuine. He was never less but invariably more than he represented himself as being. He was what he seemed to be and he was that all the way through, everywhere and always . . .

"It was his supersensitiveness to the touch of another's pain which made his soul a flaming passion of protest against injustice and drove his frail body into prodigious dynamic action. While his

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fellows were in want or in pain, Woodsworth suffered with them, when they were imprisoned he felt himself to be in chains . . .

"He not only had courage of a physical kind the courage to face a hostile crowd, to become a longshoreman, to go to prison. But he had that courage expressed in lines which he himself quoted the courage 'to go on forever and fail, and go on again', the courage which enabled him to rest 'with the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night'."

Integrity, compassion, courage—these were the qualities that his old associates had come to know in full measure in the character of J. S. Woodsworth. They were the qualities most often mentioned by those who told of sharing his work and his ideals.

There were other men, far removed from the work he was trying to do, out of sympathy with the cause he was trying to serve, who nevertheless spoke in much the same vein of deep respect and admiration of the man and his personal influence. Among these was Bruce Hutchison, then writer for the *Vancouver Sun*, a columnist politically opposed to J. S. Woodsworth and the party of which he was the leader, who penned a tribute so moving and so generous in spirit that the OCF chose it as the one most suitable to appear in its commemorative convention booklet that summer. Here are a few lines from Mr. Hutchison's tribute:

"Mr. J. S. Woodsworth was a more important figure in Canadian history than most of his contemporaries realized. He was important for what he represented rather than for his actual accomplishment. He was a symbol and a portent of a new day. History will mark him as one of the great milestones in this country . . .

"He was the most Christ-like man ever seen in Parliament, and his white beard, his flaming eye, his anger at injustice, his gentleness with everyone, and his deep booming voice of moral protest made him appear like a prophet out of the Old Testament. He was the saint in our politics. Our politics and all men who knew him, gained a certain purity from his presence and lost a vehement flame in his passing."

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Here again the same qualities appear—integrity, compassion, courage. Among those who knew him there was universal agreement about these salient features of his character.

But in Mr Hutchison's article appears a sentence which penetrates deeply into the nature of J. S. Woodsworth's contribution to his day. "He was more important for what he represented rather than for his actual accomplishment." The writer had special reference to the political achievements of J. S. Woodsworth whom he considered "too saintly for the rough-and-tumble of politics", unable by his very nature to organize a great political party, but who, nevertheless, was able to inspire other men to the action he could not himself accomplish. This is not the place to recapitulate the achievements of J. S. Woodsworth's life, measured in terms of actual legislation and improvements in social conditions. Earlier in this story an attempt has been made to sketch the facts, as the future reveals their significance more clearly, there will doubtless be many attempts to assess the concrete value of his work. Here there can be only the briefest indication of what he represented in the opinion of one witness, and the barest attempt to guess at the sources of his inspiration. We are too close to the man and his times to go further.

More than any other single individual of his day, J. S. Woodsworth represented leadership for the new moral force that was beginning to shape itself within the Canadian community. He was born into a Canada which believed that the Golden Rule could and should be applied in people's private lives, but that in public life the ethics of competition must prevail. He was a force in strengthening in thousands of minds the dawning idea that the Golden Rule must be applied in our public life with the same uncompromising logic as in private conduct, he helped much in confirming the growing suspicion that a society based on the ethics of self-advancement had become not only economically unworkable but morally rotten.

He gave leadership in creating for these thousands of minds

the knowledge that they were not alone in their thinking, and the conviction that the problem of realizing their dream of a better society, the dream of the ages, was within the grasp of the modern world. The will and intelligent effort of ordinary men and women like themselves could bring it to reality. By the time of his death there were hundreds of people in all fields of life—social service, education, politics, industry, religion, culture—working actively and consciously to build a co-operative foundation under society and to substitute the ethics of unselfishness for those of competition. There were thousands of others who, unprepared to assist actively with the change, were nevertheless conditioned by to-day's fast-moving events to accept with them the changing climate of social thinking.

In this process of consciously moulding a new ethic for the new society emerging around us, J. S. Woodsworth played a pioneer part while the process was still in its tentative beginnings in Canada, and while the need for it was grasped by so few people that its advocates were almost universally misunderstood and mistrusted. He had the courage to speak his convictions aloud, and the particular blend of persunence and ability required to command public attention.

His was a person-to-person influence, the warm contact of heart with heart, the leaping flame of ideas from mind to mind. Ten years after his passing, T. C. Douglas, the Premier of Saskatchewan, told the other delegates to the CCF national convention in Toronto of his own first experience with the influence of J. S. Woodsworth. The member of Parliament for North Centre Winnipeg was addressing one of his countless prairie audiences, keeping their attention riveted on the great chart beside him. It showed a number of concentric circles, in the inmost of which were the few members of society completely insulated by their wealth and position against the economic hazards of life. Working outwards were larger and larger circles of people, each lessening in wealth and social status, each becoming more vulnerable to the risks of life.

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Finally the speaker pointed to the great outside circle—the circle of the poor, the aged, the widows, the fatherless, the sick, the crippled, the weak and helpless among which every member of his audience might find himself at any moment, and having allowed the full significance of that great circle to sink into their minds, J. S. Woodsworth stated his conviction that any successful attempt to create a better society must begin with the outside circle, with the people most in need of help. We are the neighbours of all the people in that circle, he said, we must bring help in the only way that neighbours can be useful in the great modern community of Canada, through the agency of our Government, which we choose and which we can control and direct at will.

That was the story T. C. Douglas told. Many who heard him could have told a similar one from their own experience, for that was the consistent way in which J. S. Woodsworth worked to build the things in which he believed into the structure of Canadian life. Time could do nothing to harm a man with such a philosophy and such a method of work, for time was always on his side and working with him.

Seeking the source of a great river is an elusive adventure. Having traced back the big streams which feed it, the explorer comes to a bewildering network of little watercourses which in turn are fed by countless tiny mountain rivulets, each with its own beginnings, until finally the search loses itself in the remoteness and mystery of the towering peaks. So it is with any attempt to discover the sources of strength which made the influence of J. S. Woodsworth a powerful current flowing across this country, a current which has continued to increase in strength during the years since his death. The most one can do is to indicate two or three of the great streams that fed his life.

First, then, was his belief that we live in an ordered universe in which the principles of good and evil are continually striving

against each other for mastery, in which, as evolution proceeds to develop higher and more perfect forms of life and thought, the principles of good are sure to prevail in the end. This belief was basic with him all his life, giving rise to a spiritual buoyancy which enabled him to rise undaunted above every wave that threatened to engulf him. He felt certain that if he continued to do right as he was given to see it, his work would succeed in the final analysis. What happened to him was of no particular consequence. He was, in the words of Robert Browning's "Epilogue" which he loved:

"One who never turned his back  
but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,  
wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake."

A second great source of strength was his conviction that, though good is sure to triumph in the end, it can do so only when and in the measure that the individual is prepared to fight for the victory of good over evil. He thought of the individual spirit as a moral battleground, with conscience urging on each man to do constant battle for the triumph of right impulses within himself, confident that each victory would make more firm the habit of triumphant living. In the beginning this conception was transmitted to him by the early religious training of his parents and his Church, but he went far beyond, projecting the individual's responsibility to a struggle outside himself. Not only must each person continue to struggle within his own soul; he must now extend the struggle to the battle-field of the community, striving for the victory of right over wrong, of justice over discrimination, of love over hatred. He must do this if he were to make real in his life the vital principle of all great religious teaching: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

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It was this conviction that the individual is responsible for sharing in the organized effort of the community to create within itself the brotherhood of man, based on the real foundation of equality of opportunity to partake of the good things of life, that was his particular contribution to the moral development of his day. He felt himself an instrument through which, if he were able to keep himself clear and sensitive for the purpose, good might make itself prevail. As a young student pastor he had prayed "Oh! that God would use me as an instrument through which the Holy Spirit may speak to the people!" As his life went on, as he set himself single-mindedly to follow the gleam of goodness wherever it might lead, as he became increasingly able to communicate to others this sense of working with forces outside themselves, he felt increasingly within himself the surge of power, of sureness, along with growing humility and gratitude for the inexplicable sense of fulfilment that was given to him.

A man who was close to him in his early Ottawa years tells of an unforgettable occasion when J. S. Woodsworth shared with him something of this feeling after one such experience of spiritual insight. It was during the time when the battle for his new ideas in Parliament seemed particularly heavy because so few were engaged against such overwhelming odds. After a hard week in the House, his friend took him to spend the week-end with a group of young men who were keenly sympathetic to the new ideas. There was some general discussion in the late afternoon, and then as evening came, his friend took him out in a boat on the lake. As they rowed quietly along against the darkening crimson of the sunset, the shoreline a black silhouette against the sky, the lapping water the only sound in the stillness, J. S. Woodsworth spoke of the debate in Parliament, of his feelings of indignation and grief that men should seek to justify existing evil conditions, of a strong sense of compulsion that came over him to speak out the thoughts that were within him. And as he spoke in the House, he said,

there came over him a surge of inspiration, a sudden clarity of vision, a sense of revelation of the truth uttered by the prophets of old when they told the people "Thus saith the Lord." Moments like this, intimations of being in contact with great forces outside himself, seemed to come from some great reservoir of life which he made no pretence to understand, but of whose existence he was aware in deep humility and gratitude.

But his moral authority was no cold and bloodless thing. It was unfused with a third great source of strength, his love and compassion for his fellow-men. And in the measure that they needed him, his love and compassion increased. As Frank Underhill said later "James Woodsworth's life was one long process of identifying himself with the unfortunate and the exploited." He was the man in prison, the cripple, the man without work. He felt their pain in his soul and it hurt him cruelly. But his was not the passive suffering of acceptance. He knew how to make men feel the suffering of their brothers until they banded themselves together into a crusade against the evil. He sought social salvation for his fellow men, and in seeking it for them, he found his own spiritual fulfilment.

During the years of his maturity, at the height of his powers, he was asked by a Winnipeg daily to write an article in a series entitled "My Religion." He did so attempting to explore the secret places of his being, while acknowledging that "there is always an unmost self that cannot disclose itself." His analysis of his spiritual beliefs was as simple as it was moving. Condensed to somewhat over half its length, J. S. Woodsworth's testimony is a fitting conclusion to the story of his life.

"It is comparatively easy to say what my religion is not it is not that of childhood days. Why should it be? Strange that in almost every other phase of life we greet change with a cheer, but in religion we actually boast of arrested development.

"Again, my religion is not that of the Church. Many of the historical dogmas seem to me entirely incompatible with scientific thought; much of the medieval ritual quite inadequate to express

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modern needs, and the institution itself too largely dominated by the commercial ideals of our age . . .

"In my college days philosophy was considered one department of knowledge, theology an entirely different one . . . For me these lines of demarcation have ceased to exist. The story of the rocks is more credible than that of Genesis. 'One impulse from a vernal wood' is as religious as a sermon, a socialist agitator may be as devoted as a foreign missionary; human love may become a real sacrament. Indeed, if any one test is sufficient, he is most religious who loves most.

"Some have thought of religion as the worship of a Supreme Being. God is regarded as separate and above the world, and then there is the attempt to bring the two together again. The infinite is distinguished from the finite and then the finite attempts to define the infinite.

"How foolish for us—vanishing dewdrops of a summer's morn—to attempt to describe the Absolute in terms of our own little personalities!

"My children are not familiar with hymns of adoration, but they have been taught the lines of Hartley Coleridge—

'So then believe that every bud that sings,  
And every flower that stars the fresh green sod,  
And every thought the happy summer brings  
To the pure spirit is a word of God.' . . .

"We still use the old phrases. But how do we, the children of a scientific age, conceive of God? . . . And what is the modern man's distinctive offering—what but a willingness to co-operate with the forces of progress? . . .

"Older religious thought was much concerned with the question of personal immortality. We frankly admit that from the strictly scientific point of view the future is beyond our ken. We may think we find certain 'intimations of immortality'. Have we not all had moments of illumination when 'eternity' becomes not a period of time but a quality of existence? But after all, our primary interest is with the present life. And we are none the less spiritual for that.

"But if we no longer visualize ourselves either as 'walking golden streets' or 'gnashing our teeth in outer darkness', are we then left

with no incentives to higher living? For myself, I must say that I was never very keen on being an angel with a 'crown upon my forehead' and 'a harp within my hand' But the inner urge toward higher things is as strong as ever—yes, much stronger. No one who knows anything of the fierce joy of the conflict will worry very much about his 'reward in heaven'

In the presence of mystery, Moses took his shoes from off his feet. So, facing the fundamental problems of life and death and the universe, we stand in reverent silence. Ours is not the fear of the savage in something bewitched nor the superstition of the medievalist before an unfathomed juggler's trick, rather the humility born of the recognition of the limitations of the human mind. We feel ourselves children picking up pebbles on the beach while the great ocean of knowledge rolls beyond . . .

"Spiritual adventures are for ever new. For example, many today are experiencing a social rebirth that is as distinct and far-reaching in its effects as was the 'conversion' of an earlier day. Religion is for me not so much a personal relation between 'me' and 'God' as rather the identifying of myself with or perhaps the losing myself in some larger whole . . .

"Twenty years ago I made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. As from a vantage point on the Mount of Olives I looked across to Jerusalem and tried to readjust my beliefs and manner of life in accordance with the realities, there came to me with new force the words of Robertson of Brigham—the sacrifice of Jesus must be completed and repeated in the life of each true follower.

"The very heart of the teaching of Jesus was the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth. Some of us whose study of history and economics and social conditions has driven us to the socialist position find it easy to associate the ideal Kingdom of Jesus with the Co-operative Commonwealth of socialism.

"Religion has been regarded as conformity with certain practices and dogmas handed down from the past. Religion for me is rather a reaching out to the future—a pressing toward a mark not clearly discerned. Is not the fear of breaking with old beliefs the most insidious kind of unbelief? Faith is a confident adventuring into the unknown.

## *His Influence and its Sources*

"Haul out; cast off, shake out every sail  
Scot for the deep waters only,  
For we are bound where mariner hath not yet dared to go,  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.  
O daring joy—but safe!  
Are they not all the seas of God?  
O farther, farther, farther sail!"

## EPILOGUE

"When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home."

During those last weeks, when he realized that his life was drawing to a close, Father had talked over the arrangements for his funeral. We knew that later there would be memorial services where the public would pay tribute to his memory, but the immediate one was the simple leave-taking of the family. We assembled in the dim funeral chapel, conscious that though he was gone, his spirit would live with us to the end of our lives and beyond, as long as men and women worked for the things he had held so dear.

There was little formality at the service. According to his wish, Mildred Fahnest, an ardent pacifist and long-time friend, spoke of the yearning that was nearest his heart, a world where there would be peace and brotherhood among mankind, and of his conviction that such a world could be created only by those who had rejected the instrument of force. She spoke quietly, from deep emotion, concluding with the verses of farewell from the Indian poet, Khalil Gibran. Then, like the clear song of a bird, the voice of his young niece, Kathleen Rose, filled the chapel as she sang one of his favourite hymns.

We went down to the ocean where his eldest son's little cabin

### *J. S. Woodsworth*

cruiser was ready. She headed out into the Gulf of Georgia in brilliant sunshine, through choppy seas, the wind blowing the salt spray into our faces the way he had loved to feel it. Mother carried the funeral urn containing his ashes.

In the immensity of sky and sea the launch rode at anchor while Mother carried out his last wish. Slowly she cast his ashes on the waves that they might mingle with the elements that touch all shores and know no boundaries. Then we saw that she held in her hand a few leaves of her shamrock plant, a growing slip from the love-token he had given her before they were married. She looked at the living green for a moment and then very slowly let it drift into the waters.

And so J. S. Woodsworth returned to the elements from which he came. A dozen years before, during a quiet voyage, he had written Mother a letter which expressed much of what we all felt as we gave his ashes to the ocean.

"There is something of mystery about the sea. In the silence I could feel the quiet beating of my heart. Deeper, the throbbing of the engines—the heartbeat of the ship. And deeper still the feeling of the great heart of the ocean. And at times it seemed as if, deeper still, the heartbeat of the universe itself—that mysterious something—a mightier Ocean—no, almost an all-embracing Life of which we were but an infinitesimal part. And the surging waters, and the clear, sweet, far-away voices, and you all at home, and the old home, and the living, throbbing Universe all blended into one harmonious Whole—and I slept. And perhaps so it shall be with the long sleep—a great understanding and a quiet contentment."

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DUE RUTH MAR 20 1984	RUTH DEC 17 1987
MAR 14 '84	DEL 28 RETURN
JAN 18 '84 RUTH	DUE RUTH FEB 06 '88
RETURN JUN 11	FEB 08 RETURN

APR 15 1978

AUG 21 RETURN		MAR 21 '77	
BIRTH NO 10 '76		MAR 1	
NOV 14 RETURN		BIRTH NO 11 '77	
BIRTH DE 11 '79		APR 1 RETURN	
DEC 3 RETURN		BIRTH NO 12 '78	
JAN 2 '78		JAN 15 RETURN	
FEB 1 RETURN		MAR 02 RETURN	
BIRTH MAR 1 '76		MAR 2 RETURN	
MAR 20 '76		MAR 30 RETURN	
MAR 21 RETURN		APR 29 '78	
BIRTH MAR 1 '76		APR 21 RETURN	
MAR 29 RETURN		BIRTH SE 15 '78	
BIRTH MAR 28 '78		AUG 09 RETURN	
APR 27 RETURN		BIRTH SEP 16 '78	
BIRTH MAR 04 '77		NOV 10 RETURN	
MAR 4 RETURN			

FC 581 W6 M15 1953 C-3  
MACINNIS GRACE WOODSWORTH 1905-  
J S WOODSWORTH

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*MacInnis, G*  
*C-3*

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FC 581 W6 M15 1953 C. 3  
MacInnis, Grace (Woodsworth)  
1905-

J. S. Woodsworth:

0245042A MAIN

MAIN

